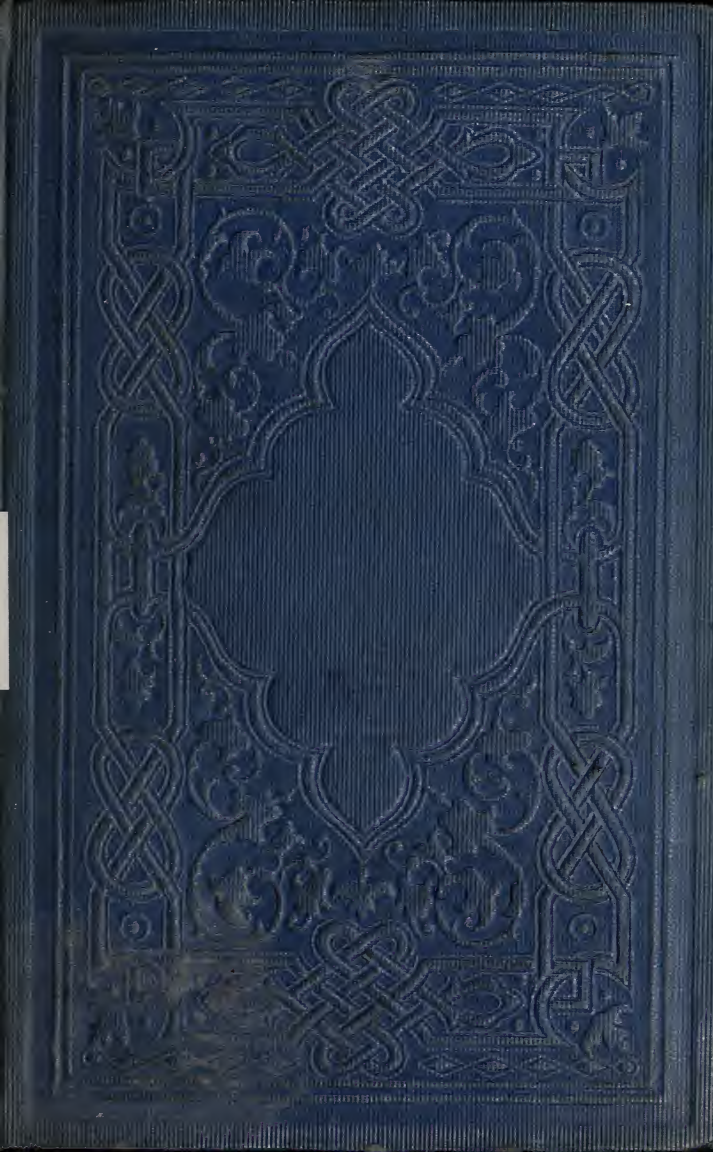




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DISCOURSE
ON
DOMESTIC PIETY
AND
FAMILY GOVERNMENT
IN FOUR PARTS.

BY
✓
REV. JOHN H. POWER. *u d*

EDITED BY
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1816
REV. B. F. TEFFT, D. D.

Cincinnati:

PUBLISHED BY SWORMSTEDT AND POWER,
FOR THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, AT THE WESTERN BOOK
CONCERN, CORNER OF MAIN AND EIGHTH STREETS.

—
R. P. THOMPSON, PRINTER.
1851.

BV4526

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PREFACE.

AT the repeated solicitation of friends, whose judgments were respected, the following "Discourse" was commenced, with a view, simply, of preparing for publication a sermon of ordinary length, on the subject of domestic piety; but before we were aware, it had increased on our hands, so as to extend quite beyond that limit. We had then either to lay it aside and dismiss the undertaking altogether, or to change its form. For a time, we chose the former, and laid the whole matter by; till, on the pressing renewal of those requests, it was resumed, and is now given to the reader in its present form.

With this brief explanation, it is committed to its fate in the world, accom-

panied with the hope that it may be read with candor and care, by all into whose hands it may come; and that Providence may so direct, that it may contribute something to the only object had in view in its publication; namely, the glory of God, in the well-being and salvation of mankind. J. H. P.

Cincinnati, O., January, 1851.

DISCOURSE
ON
DOMESTIC PIETY.

PART I.

“And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord,” JOSHUA xxiv, 15.

THE portion of holy Scripture recited above, as our motto, suggests alike the topics for discussion and arrangement of the discourse. A sketch of its history can not fail to furnish some items of deep interest for thought and reflection. And, first, it will be seen, that no degree of zeal or fidelity, in the performance of a part of our duties, can procure exemption from the obligations to discharge the whole; and that private virtues and personal

excellences can, by no means, atone for delinquencies in regard to relative duties and public trusts. Some of the incidents in the history of Moses are admonitory exemplifications of these facts. He was the agent, selected by divine Wisdom, to deliver the children of Israel from their bondage and degradation in Egypt, and to conduct them to the possession of the promised inheritance—the land of Canaan. By a train of providences, which none but a Being of infinite perfections could organize and control, he was admirably prepared for, and, under the special call of God, entered upon this arduous, but honorable work.

By the solemn announcement of the Divine message to Pharaoh, repeated rebukes for his infidelity, and a series of stupendous miracles, such as the world had never witnessed before, he subdued the tyrant, rent the yoke of bondage, disinthralled the oppressed—liberated the people of God. But, notwithstanding his divinely-attested fidelity in all this work,

he was, by the murmurings and rebellion of the people at the waters of strife, betrayed into indiscretion of words and action, by which he forfeited the honor and privilege of consummating his mission by settling Israel in the promised land. God said, "Thou shalt not go over to possess the land, but shalt die on this side Jordan;" and, at the appointed time, Moses was called to the summit of Nebo, there died, and his Maker buried him, doubtless, by the ministry of angels; and his lonely sepulcher remains unknown to man to this day—solemn warning to all, but especially those to whom are committed, in any degree, the interests of others, that they should constantly keep the fear of God before their eyes, as indispensable to the perfecting of his work in their own hearts, and performing his work in their lives.

We may see, secondly, how egregiously men mistake, in supposing that the prosperity of the Church can hardly survive the withdrawal of their aid, and that even

the Divine plans can scarcely be accomplished without their agency. But God is not straitened for means or instruments to effect the purposes of his providence or grace.

Hence, while Moses was hastening to the grave, and his people yet in the wilderness, divine Wisdom was preparing his successor; and when death had gathered him to his fathers, Joshua was called and qualified to take his place before all Israel, and to inherit the honor of finishing the work which was left incomplete by his less patient predecessor. Admonished by the solemnities of the past, and fully alive to the interests of the future, he commenced the duties of his high trust with fear and trembling, but with an abiding and unbounded confidence in the Divine assistance.

He marshaled the people to the work, divided the waters of the Jordan, led them over dry shod, demolished Jericho, subdued their enemies, and divided the land by lot among the tribes of Israel.

As a public character, having accomplished the work assigned him, with unimpeachable fidelity to God and to the state, and now about to retire from this official relation, he assembled "all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God." Here he addressed them; and his address comprises an epitome of their own history, from the father of Abraham, to the hour of their interview; but, particularly, the providences of God toward them, in all the vicissitudes through which they had been called to pass; in all of which, Divine chastenings marked their rebellion, and Heaven's blessings crowned their obedience.

And with these facts fresh in their memory, and these points distinctly stated, he appealed to them in the language that lies before us: "Choose you this day whom you will serve, whether the gods, or idols of the antediluvians, or the idols

of the Canaanites in whose land you dwell; or whether you will serve God, your divine benefactor, who has not only given you your being, but crowned it with so many mercies and blessings."

And, as every honest and consistent man will do, he added to instruction the force of example, and distinctly stated the present purpose of his own heart, in regard to the conduct of his future life: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

This discourse will be divided into several parts; but, that we may have a general view of the arrangement before us, at once, we here state the particulars that will engage attention in the investigation of the subject. We inquire,

I. WHO CONSTITUTE OUR HOUSEHOLD, OR FAMILY? And,

II. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN "ME AND MY HOUSE SERVING THE LORD." Consider,

III. SOME OF THE MOTIVES THAT SHOULD INDUCE US TO SERVE THE LORD WITH OUR HOUSE; OR CAREFULLY TO CULTIVATE, AND

CONSTANTLY TO PRACTICE, DOMESTIC PIETY.
In conclusion,

IV. AN APPEAL TO ALL CONCERNED, WITH
REGARD TO THE INCALCULABLE CONSEQUEN-
CES INVOLVED IN THESE TOPICS. And,

I. As the domestic relations were the first, and most specific, ordained of Heaven in regard to man, and human society in all ages, so its obligations and duties, more than all others, involve the universal interests of the human family for time and eternity. To understand the force of these facts, in relation to the family as a whole, it is necessary that we have a distinct view of the parts of which it is constituted. In prosecuting this inquiry, it will be seen that the constituent parts of the household include particularly,

1. *The head and governor of the family—the husband, the father.* He, by the organization of human society and Divine appointment, stands first, and highest, in authority; and his responsibilities are in exact proportion to the distinguished position assigned him, by unerring Wisdom,

in this interesting miniature empire—his own beloved domestic charge. And each member has a right to look up to him, in his elevation, as a living example of all that is worthy of imitation, in order to render home peaceful, the domestic relations sacred, life useful and happy, death tranquil, and to prepare for heaven, as the final home of the whole family. This is true of all who sustain this relation, in every condition of life. It applies, with equal force, to the great, the opulent, the learned, the elevated, the refined, and honorable, as to those in the common walks of life—the illiterate, poverty-stricken, and obscure; as well to those who wear the distinctions of office, and are clothed with authority to rule, as to those who are inferiors, and bound to serve or obey; as well to those who are living regardless of the claims of Jesus Christ, as to his most devoted disciples. No delinquencies, in this exalted relation, can possibly absolve from its divinely-ordained obligation.

It is lamentably true, however, that many who occupy this position in their household, either never reflect seriously on the importance of the trust they have assumed, or attempt to excuse themselves from its duties because of the want of gifts, experience, time, or something unpropitious in their business, or circumstances. But all this—every thing of the kind—comes too late. God will not be mocked. He has provided for, and authorized, this relation in human society, and has appointed its duties and obligations, its comforts and care, its objects and interests, for the present and the future world; and those who enter upon the relation of husband, and head of a family, do, by the appointment of God, most deliberately and of choice, assume all the responsibilities and duties that he has attached to this sacred union. And he who makes this choice with any other feelings, or views, either dissembles before God, or is ignorant of what he is doing, or has done, and will, most likely,

strew his path through life with sorrows, plant his dying pillow with thorns, plunge his soul at last into perdition, and drag a ruined family with him to the same hopeless prison. Let all who sustain this relation, think of their obligations—think of the good or evil they can, and will, do, in regard to the highest interest of their families. Another and not less important member of the household, is

2. *The governess in the family—the wife, the mother.* By Divine arrangement, she stands next, and nearest to the husband in regard to authority, dignity, and duties; and so indissoluble are their relations, responsibilities, and interest, that the infinite Author of their being, and the boundless source of all their blessings, has pronounced them “ONE.”

All that has been said, in regard to the husband, applies with equal force to the wife in her relations to him, to God, and to each member of her family. In his absence, all the cares and duties pertain-

ing to the order, peace, well-being, and piety of the household devolve on her; and as in the case of the husband in his place, so there is no circumstance that can release, or absolve, the wife in her proper sphere, from those obligations and duties, which God has assigned her in the domestic charge. She may, indeed, shrink from them, and, in her neglect, attempt to excuse herself; but, in entering into this union, she also voluntarily assumed all the responsibilities and cares which God has attached to it, in the case of the wife and mother. And although she may close her eyes against, and succeed to some extent in dismissing, those solemn truths from her mind, in life, if they do not aggravate her anguish in the hour of death, they will meet her in the final judgment as fearful proof of her delinquency on earth, and her utter unfitness for heaven. Let all, therefore, who sustain this relation, remember the importance of their position, the dignity of their character, the promise of Divine grace,

the power of living faith, and the rewards of heavenly glory; and let them, in the name and strength of Him whom they are called to serve, meet their obligations with firmness, and discharge their duties with faithfulness, in sure and certain hope of a blessed immortality at the right hand of God. But, furthermore,

3. "*Me and my house*" includes, in a special manner, our children. As parents, next to the salvation of their own souls in heaven, the highest and most important trust confided to them, by the Almighty, is the well-being and salvation of their dear children.

And as they sustain relations to, and have a control over, them which are committed to none others, they can, and will, exert an influence in their families that others can not—an influence that will not only affect their interests and happiness in time, but through all eternity. Therefore, God requires of parents, and nothing less will meet his claims upon them, that they unremittingly exert all

this authority and influence for the well-being and, especially, the salvation of their children.

Hence the Divine injunction, "Train up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Parents have fearful responsibilities resting upon them, in regard to their children, which, it is to be feared, are but too little felt or appreciated by many. How few, comparatively, give evidence that their hearts are as deeply penetrated with a sense of the worth of the immortal souls of their children, or that they desire, and are laboring for, their salvation in heaven, as ardently as they desire, and are striving to secure, and promote, their comfort and happiness in this world! The children constitute an important and interesting portion of the household; and their moral and spiritual interests can not be neglected by parents but at the peril of their own eternal salvation. And this is not all; for "me and my house" implies and includes,

4. *All who are connected or associated*

with the family, temporarily in business, or otherwise: such as clerks, journeymen, apprentices, laborers, and all that are in our employment receiving remuneration for their services, mingling as boarders, in part or in whole, with the domestic charge. To this view some, even professing godliness, take exceptions, on the ground, that we are not to obtrude our religion, or religious services, upon others, and, especially, those who are not of our order, or members of our families permanently. Others object, that it will interrupt their business to require attendance on, and conformity to, the worship of God in their families, by all those in their employment; while others try to diminish their responsibilities, and circumscribe their duties on other grounds, and for other reasons, equally frivolous and not less offensive to God.

Heads of families may succeed, by these and various other means, in partially satisfying their conscience, and in excusing themselves for the neglect of

the solemn duties, and sacred obligations, which God has affixed to the position in society which they have voluntarily assumed by entering upon this relation; but it is self-deception of the most fatal character, creating a partial peace that will only aggravate the discovery of their fearful delinquency, when it may be too late to repair, or prevent, the evils inflicted on themselves and others, both in this and the eternal world.

It is a pernicious error, that, because we pay men for their services, and though for the time being we take them into our families, we are to have no control over, concern for, or responsibility about, their morals, and the salvation of their immortal souls. This unchristian view of the subject has, no doubt, laid the foundation for the final ruin of multitudes of youth, and young men, of the most promising talents. Such have left the home of their childhood, and the restraints and instructions of kind parents, and have gone into shops, stores, counting-houses, and other

departments of business, and have become members of other families, who, instead of acting on the principle, with a single eye to the Divine glory, “as for me and my house”—including all its members, whether permanent or temporary—“we will serve the Lord,” seem to have no higher rule of action than that of rendering the services of this portion of their families most available in dollars and cents, without any regard to the honor of God in the salvation of their precious souls. This, however, is but the commencement, and forms only a very small part, of the evil; for, not only are such persons, at a period of life when restraint, care, and advice, are most needed, turned loose upon the corrupt tide of circumstances, to be, almost certainly, borne away, by loss of character, ruin of reputation, and recklessness of moral principle, to endless perdition, but their example and influence can not fail to corrupt the minds and morals of, at least, the younger members of the family with whom they asso-

ciate, and thereby lay the foundation for them to pursue a similar course of folly and crime in time, and to endure a corresponding weight of sorrow in eternity. But, indeed, it is impossible to observe even the form of godliness in our families, much less can we "serve the Lord, acceptably, with our house," when our clerks, apprentices, and those in our employ, are not required to observe and conform to the decent order and decorum, that become the worship of God, in the domestic circle.

There are two important facts that, in settling this question, can not be too carefully considered. First. God has made it the imperative duty of the united heads of families to exclude, as far as possible, all influences and examples that would depreciate the importance, solemnity, or dignity of the worship of God in their house, or that would, either directly or indirectly, vitiate the minds, or morals, of any of its members. But these obligations can never be met, the evils pre-

vented, and the blessings secured, but by requiring all connected with the family, in business or otherwise, to conform to the reasonable requirements of the word of God in the worshiping household. Secondly. The Author of our being has so constituted man, and organized human society, that each individual is, immediately or remotely, dependent on good society for his safety, comfort, and happiness, as far as circumstances and human instrumentalities are concerned; consequently, each one is bound, by obligations as clear and strong as are the interests involved, while he is enjoying the protections and benefits of a healthy state of society, not only not to infringe the rights of others, or the best interests of society, but to conform in all things, where conscience is not violated, to principles which will best promote his own and the well-being of all others in this and the future world. All these high and sacred interests are involved in sound domestic piety, which can be maintained only by the

strict observance of the Divine rule—"as for me and my house," as already explained, "we will serve the Lord."

It is not an experiment yet to be settled whether men can prosecute lawful business operations on strictly Christian principles. This has been so fully demonstrated, as to exclude all doubt. And the man who engages in a business, which conflicts with any moral precept of the Bible, or that will not allow him time to, or in the regular pursuit of which he can not, faithfully worship and serve God, with all his house, does it at his peril, and fearfully offends against Heaven. If this reasonable, Scriptural principle, of serving God domestically, were strictly observed, who can estimate the happy results to mankind that would follow in this life, and in the world to come! Each individual, whatever may be his age or circumstances in life, has to be a member of some family, either permanently or temporarily, and if all heads of households were to serve the Lord with their domes-

tic charge, all men would be brought, to some extent, under moral and religious influence.

It can not be too deeply inscribed upon the heart of every one, that no family can disregard the responsibilities of their relations, and neglect this incalculably-important duty of domestic religion, without incurring the displeasure of God here; "for the curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked," and the endless curse of his violated law hereafter; for "these shall go away into everlasting punishment," in the day of final judgment and irrevocable retribution.

PART II.

"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him," GENESIS XVIII, 19.

II. WHAT IS IMPLIED BY "ME AND MY HOUSE SERVING THE LORD?"

This is an inquiry of no ordinary character. In its full sense, it comprehends all that constitutes and belongs to internal and experimental, external and practical religion, in the members, individually, and also in their associated relations, as a pious and devoted family. It implies the observance of all the ordinances of the Gospel—the humble and faithful use of all the public and private means of grace. The proper authority of the united head, and due subordination of all the members of the household, must be clearly defined, well understood, and steadily maintained, as absolutely indispensable in this great work. Hence, it devolves on parents to take a special supervision

of their families in regard to the interests of their souls, by restraining them from every thing forbidden in the word of God, and that would prevent, or vitiate, the proper observance of the means and institutions connected with their peace and piety on earth, and their salvation in heaven. Also, to provide the facilities for, and as far as their authority and influence extend, to secure the attendance of all their house on the instituted means of religion, according to their capacities and conditions in life. And how will parents, who make these things second to any others in this world, be able to meet the fearful consequences of their folly and crime in the final judgment? But the great work now under consideration is of such surpassing importance, as not only to justify, but to require a more particular examination of its several parts. And,

First. *It implies domestic, or family government.* This neglected, will render all other efforts to serve God, domestically, vain and wholly unavailing. Where

there is piety such as Heaven approves—religion that God will own and honor—either in individuals or families, there must be ORDER. But where there is no regular government in the house, either by those to whom authority is confided neglecting to use it, or by their using it improperly, there can be no *order*, such as the service of God and religion require. And who, that has given attention to the subject, can suppress the conviction that there is a fountain of evil here of most fearful magnitude, which is daily sending forth its corrupting streams into almost every department of human society, both civil and religious? And who is prepared to affirm that a great amount of the disorders abroad in community, the state, the nation, if not throughout the world, is not traceable, directly or indirectly, to this wicked and ruinous source—the neglect of order and proper government in the domestic charge? How many families are there that have no established order or rules of government whatever! Each

one, from the father down to the youngest member, rules in turn, or rather wields a kind of domestic despotism, for the time, as the excitement of anger, pride, or some other passion, prompts and prevails. But this confusion in the family circle is by no means the worst feature of the case. There are many others, to present which, and fully to acquit our conscience before God, requires great plainness of discussion. And, however unpleasant the truth, the whole truth may be, and whatever exceptions may be taken now to the manner of exhibiting it, we have no fears that any will dare to bring it as a charge against us when we meet at the bar of final judgment.

In presenting this subject in its true character, the chief embarrassment is the fearful amount of evidence in support of the fact that there are parents—and O, their number who can tell!—who make no ordinary pretensions to piety, but whose government, in their family, if it deserves the name, is little less than a system of

falsehood, fraud, and deception; which is constantly exerting a demoralizing influence on the hearts and lives of their children, whom they profess tenderly to love, and for whose temporal interests they manifest a laudable zeal and diligence. When the disorders of an ungoverned household irritate and provoke the impatient and angry feelings of the parents—which is always the case, more or less, in such families—that excitement becomes the principle of action and government, for the time being, and displays itself, either in precipitate and indiscreet correction, the effects of which pass off with the occasion, or, which is most generally the case, in threats of severity or violence, which are never intended to be fulfilled. Humiliating as it may be, we will furnish a specimen of the folly and falsehood of such mistaken, not to say wicked, parents. To restrain their children from wrong, or to induce obedience, they will proclaim: “I will correct you till there is scarcely life left in you;” “I will break your bones;”

“I will almost skin you;” or, “Mr. B. will cut off your ears;” “He will bleed you;” or, “He will take you home with him;” with a host of similar declarations. What is all this but falsehood? And how soon do children learn it to be such, and treat it in like manner! They soon know that these declarations are never to be executed, and they soon learn to treat with contempt the parents who have so grossly abused the authority with which God has invested them. And, doubtless, seeds of misrule, insubordination, and evil are, by these means, sown, that will ripen into domestic misery in time, and hopeless wailing in eternity! When these excitements subside, and in families where they seldom or never occur, there is frequently a false kindness, and excessive indulgence prevailing, which are little, if any, less derogatory to the dignity of parents, the purity of religion, the peace of the family, the salvation of its members, and the glory of God, than those evils just mentioned. Those parents seem to

think that their children are either so faultless that they do not require restraint or correction, or they are so delicate and interesting that neither can be administered. They substitute a practical indifference to duty and domestic order for pious patience, in the midst of confusion—the result of their own delinquency. They have virtually yielded the control of their charge, and most generally the children govern.

If such parents would have peace and order in the house, it must be purchased. If they would be obeyed, it must be the reward of wages, at least promised, if never paid. For example: a child cries; friends and visitors are present; the peace of the house is destroyed; confusion and mortification redden the cheeks of the delinquent parents; they have lost their influence to restrain, and to restore peace and order in their household; the little hero triumphs and glories in his victory; the last resort of the degraded parents is to effect a treaty and purchase a temporary peace.

And the means are as incompatible with piety as the principle is on which they propose to secure the end. "Now," say they, "if you will hush and be good, you shall have some money, and may go to Mr. D.'s shop and buy candy;" or, "I will give you some sugar," "Buy you another toy," or, "You may go to Mr. G.'s, and see them." When services are required, a similar process must be resorted to. But are these promises made with solemn reference to truth, and an honest purpose to perform them? Their subsequent conduct will furnish the answer. When reminded of their promises by the children, they affect to have forgotten them; insist that the claimant is mistaken—is crazy, and does not know what it is talking about! All this—and happy the parent who can plead not guilty—is but a species of hypocrisy and fraud. It commences with falsehood and a design to deceive. It is to make promises never to be redeemed; to excite hopes not to be realized, expectations only to be disappointed. The minor members,

thus deceived, mortified, and provoked, soon begin to imitate those examples, and lessons of dissimulation and deception; supposing, no doubt, that if the parents can set the examples, it will be no great evil for the children to follow them.

Another branch of this evil is seen in the conduct of those parents who, alike regardless of their own dignity and duties, the safety and well-being of their children, the order and peace of other families, will send their children, or allow them to go to the streets, the fields, or their neighbors', just to get rid of their noise and trouble at home. Who can estimate the criminality of such parents, whose imperative duty it is to teach their offspring to love and practice truth, honesty, virtue, and holiness, as the only means of happiness here and salvation in heaven; thus corrupting the minds and morals of their dear children, by those unpardonable practices, which tend, inevitably, to disgrace on earth, and to perdition in hell? or, what apology can be offered for such gross

parental delinquency? O, deluded parents, you are purchasing temporary release from domestic cares, at a fearful price! It will cost you a good conscience, the favor of God, and heaven itself; and the bitter pains of the second death will be the wages of such wickedness, unless speedy repentance and thorough reformation avert the justly-merited and long-provoked calamity.

Some, from false refinement, or mistaken views of a pastor's responsibilities, and others, for self-defense and justification, object, "that it is descending from the dignity of ministerial character and calling, to notice these *little things*." Indeed! And it will be well if the light of eternity does not reveal the awful fact, that professed ministers of Christ have been deterred, by this cry of "little things," from declaring, fully, the whole counsel of God, and have left popular sins unreprieved, ruinous vices unreformed, prevalent evils unrebuked, and, consequently, souls forever lost, and their blood be found in the

watchman's skirts. O, my Master, wake up the messengers of thy mercy and truth to an abiding sense of the fearful responsibilities of their high calling!

But who that is candid and competent to judge, has pronounced those delinquencies and disorders "little things?" Has God? Verily, he has not. Witness his withering rebukes of Eli, the priest of his own altar, and mark the unexampled judgments that followed the delinquency. And, furthermore: who will dare to call them "little things," if we look at their consequences? From these domestic anarchies are sent forth more than half the woes that curse an apostate race. Look upon neglected childhood and youth in the streets, alleys, lanes, and neighborhoods, and their almost infant tongues, that can scarcely lisp distinctly the names of their guilty parents, are uttering blasphemy against the name of God; the feet, that are scarcely able to bear the slender frame, are, unrestrained, entering upon the broad way of Sabbath desecration, vice, corrup-

tion, and death; the hands, that have not yet learned their appropriate work, are employed in miniature burglary, pilfering, and crime. And all this is but the "beginning of sorrow." Behold the thousands of the youth in the country, the villages, the towns, and cities of our land, and witness the fearful advances they have made in vice; their disregard of moral restraint, their haughty contempt of sacred things, their annoyance of worshiping assemblies in the house of God; and could we follow them in their nightly revelings, and their visits to those scenes and sinks of iniquity that almost deter the villain grown gray in vice, the heart would sicken at the sight, and exclaim: "Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there?" Are these *little things*? Are they unworthy the notice of the friend of his race—the minister of Jesus Christ—the faithful man of God? But this is not all. From the ranks of these juvenile offenders is furnished a class of a higher grade in crime; who disregard

law and order, both human and divine—the gambler, the counterfeiter, the swindler, the thief, the robber, the murderer; and still more corrupt, the adulterer and seducer—the worst offenders that are out of the lake that burns with quenchless fire. Those fruits are seen, and their deadly influence felt by community, in the utter contempt of all authority, the violence of mobs, with which we have been cursed, and the nation disgraced in the eyes of the civilized world for the last few years. From these graduates in crime are supplied most of the ruined inmates of the hospitals, poor-houses, and penitentiaries; as, also, the subjects of insulted, indignant law and justice, for public execution.

Look at the links in this chain that binds the slaves of sin! Mark the steps that lead to this fearful precipice, from which so many have made the fatal plunge! It commences, generally, in parental neglect. Childhood and youth, uncontrolled and uninstructed, soon become

impatient of all restraint. Home becomes a prison. They leave it as long and often as possible; choose their own associates; "evil communications corrupt good manners;" they make rapid advancement in vice, and speedily ripen for ruin. Parents would now restrain; but their authority is utterly contemned. They sigh; but it is too late. They weep; but their tears are unavailing. They implore; but it is disregarded. With clouds and darkness overspreading every prospect, they feel that they are hastening to the grave in sorrow; and with an accusing conscience and a bleeding heart, have to look upon the moral and domestic wreck that their own negligence has wrought. If death terminated these evils with regard to delinquent parents and their ruined offspring, it would, in part, relieve the case.

"But ah! destruction stops not there;
Sin kills beyond the tomb;"

and we must wait the developments of the final judgment, fully to estimate the magnitude of the guilt, and the amount of

misery that its victims are doomed to endure in the eternal world. And now, do any inquire, What must be done to arrest this tide of vice, and remedy the destroying evils? The following will, to some extent, furnish an answer:

1. *The hearts of parents must be deeply penetrated with an abiding conviction that God imperatively requires their most ardent and persevering attention to the order, peace, morals, piety, and salvation of their children—their whole family.* Without this interest at heart, domestic duties will either be neglected, and home will assume the gloomy aspect of a prison, or they will become oppressive, and life itself a burden. But with this heart-stirring affection for the family, and inspired with the hope of their happiness and well-being in time, and their salvation in heaven, life's heaviest burdens will be borne with patience and resignation, and its duties performed with fidelity and delight.

2. *Truth, uncompromising truth, must be the governing principle in the house-*

hold. All evasion and equivocation must be avoided, as worse than the deadly poison of the destroying serpent. There is no exception to this rule. It can never be violated with impunity. The least departure will be followed by a corresponding corruption of mind and morals, and, unrepented of, will ruin the soul. "All liars shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone." While parents scrupulously make truth the governing element of their own actions, its inestimable importance must be clearly explained to, affectionately inculcated on, and unconditionally required of, every member of the family, at all times, and under every circumstance.

3. *The divinely-ordained authority of parents, and the corresponding subordination of the children, must be fully understood, and firmly settled, and the will of the parents must be the rule of action to the whole family.* Less than this will not only fail to secure the end proposed, but must result in domestic confusion.

Hence, there must be harmony, a perfect agreement of sentiment and action, on the part of parents—the father and the mother—in regard to the government of their family. Whatever may be the sacrifice, it must be made, to secure this unanimity of principle and practice; otherwise, they will inevitably destroy each other's influence, and, most likely, prove a ruinous curse to the household whom Heaven appointed them to bless. But,

4. *The will of parents, as the rule of action to their domestic charge, must always be reasonable, and wisely adapted to the age and condition of the several members of their family.* The greatest evils may result from a contrary course. Require less than ought to be rendered, and time is allowed for idleness—the fruitful source of ten thousand vices, that terminate in eternal death. If more is demanded than is proper, it can not be performed, and will discourage. Parents must, then, either be cruel, or change their requirements. If the former, they will

be objects of dread and disgust; if the latter, of disregard and contempt.

5. *When the requisitions are reasonable, suited to the capacity and understanding of those whom they are to govern, plainly and affectionately presented, in the fear of God, then the will of the children must be absolutely subdued to submission to this rule.* Be not alarmed at the term "subdued." It is not too strong. There is nothing in it, in this connection, cruel, unkind, or oppressive. It implies nothing, but what reason, duty, peace, love, and God require; and less than this can never secure that order, without which we never can serve the Lord acceptably. What! think of a family where the members may, or may not, obey the will of the parents, just as they choose; and can a scene be imagined, in which insubordination and confusion are more certain to reign, than in such a family? Surely not. The demand being reasonable, obedience must be rendered unhesitatingly; no delay, no contention; and if

explanations are necessary, let them be made after the commands are complied with—after the service is performed.

6. *These few plain, but comprehensive and Scriptural, elementary principles, essential to domestic order, must be rendered familiar to the mind of every member of the household.* Their importance must be impressed upon every heart, till they become the controlling principle of action, and are scrupulously observed, in all the operations of the whole family; especially in regard to all angry contentions, provocation, strifes, and bitterness. All these must be unconditionally suppressed and prohibited, or they will feed the depravity of fallen human nature, destroy the kinder sympathies of the heart, alienate the affections, ruin domestic peace, and render every effort to serve God, with our house, little less than mere mockery of sacred things. And here allow a word in relation to an evil so common in most families that it is scarcely noticed; and many will not readily pardon the faithful min-

ister who dares to give it any attention. But it is none the less an evil of ruinous tendency, because of its commonness. We mean the evil, not to say sin, on the part of parents for allowing it, and the great evil to the children which are indulged in it, of habitual and unnecessary crying. Little importance as is attached to this practice, it is fraught with fearful consequences. It is the fuel that feeds the fires of fretfulness, impatience, self-will, and rebellion. Would that parents might reflect on this, as more or less connected with most of the evils that annoy the peace, and imbitter the cup of domestic life! The unrestrained, useless crying of the children prepares the way for almost every vice. It is the practical indulgence of fallen, human nature. It is the child's method of exhibiting anger, resentment, and stubbornness—of resisting proper restraint, subordination, and government. It is the highest degree of selfishness and rebellion, and of disregard for the peace, happiness, privileges, and rights of

others, that the child is capable of. The evils of this hateful practice, "growing with his growth, and strengthening with his strength," soon begin to manifest themselves in other ways, beside mere crying and screaming, till all is confusion; for the *child* that has never been taught the useful lesson of salutary restraint in *this* matter, soon becomes a *youth*, that denies all right to be restrained in *any thing*. He is ungovernable at home, at school, at Church, in business, and every-where else. Soon, he contemns parental authority, disregards human laws, and practically sets at defiance the laws and requirements of Heaven. *Then*, the rivulet of self-will was allowed to run without restraint; *now*, the stream flows with a boldness that defies control, and, most likely, will never be arrested till it plunges its victim into the lake of endless anguish! And deluded parents may see, in the light of the judgment bar of God, that their delinquency, in allowing this evil in their children, has laid the foundation for their

final perdition. Do any inquire, what can be done to cure this evil? The answer is plain. Parents must do their duty, their whole duty. The purpose must be fixed, that all useless crying among the children must cease; that it must be done; there must be no conditions about it; cease it must. Explain the principle clearly and affectionately, to all those who are old enough to understand any thing on the subject, that this evil must terminate, and that, in this respect, there must be peace and order in the family.

Then, in the fear of God, enforce the rule, "*The will of the parents must govern.*" But, to insure success, it must be matter of special attention, and unremittingly persevered in, till the point is gained, and the *will* of the children brought into subjection to that of the parents. Then it must be the standing order of the house, that, whenever this unreasonable annoyance occurs, it must absolutely be arrested instantly, and silenced on the spot. Un-

less this is made the invariable rule of the family, every other effort will be unavailing; for though you may partially succeed for a time, soon all will again relapse into domestic disorder. To compass this object requires patience and perseverance, and the rod of correction may be indispensable. This will be repulsive, and painful to the feelings; but its neglect may, far beyond the reach of all remedy, forever pierce the hearts of parents.

After all, not a few parents affect to treat this subject as a trifling matter—too little for their particular attention, and justify themselves on the ground of a want of time. “We have not time,” they say, “to care about the crying of our children. We have other matters, of more importance, to attend to.” Other matters to attend to! Not time! What! Not time to discharge one of the most important duties that God requires at your hands: to train up your children in his fear? Not time to restrain your children from an evil that may imbitter your own

cup through life, and finally ruin their souls? If you saw your child about to put out his eyes, would you not take time to prevent him, if possible? But what is the loss of those organs, compared with that moral and spiritual blindness to which this practice, in its final fruits, inevitably leads? If you beheld your children about to plunge into the fire, would you not rush at all hazards to their rescue? But the practice, in which you are daily indulging them, with the selfishness and vices to which it leads, will plunge them into the fire of an interminable hell! O, parents, on whom such fearful responsibilities rest, with regard to your families, do not trifle with their interests, your own souls, and the claims of God; but wake up to your whole duty, before the hopeless wreck of reputation and morals of your children arouse you from your fatal delusion, to weep over the ruin that your folly has wrought, but which your tears can never repair.

But to govern and raise the family, in

the fear and service of God, implies much more than to bring the members under the reasonable restraints that have been named.

Secondly. *They must be educated*—faithfully instructed, in all things that pertain to their deportment and comfort at home, their respectability and usefulness in society, their happiness in life, their peace in death, and their glory in heaven.

While a full discussion of this subject would fill a volume, present circumstances will allow only a few passing remarks, in this connection.

1. *This education, or training, is domestic, and thoroughly practical.* It begins at home, belongs to the household, and is of daily utility. It includes every member, and consists in being taught, and reducing the instruction into daily practice, that each one, by kindness, care, the love of order, and industry, can contribute something to the general peace, prosperity, and happiness, of the family

as a whole. To succeed in this, parents must make every effort possible to render home—*their own home*, however humble and obscure—comfortable and desirable; yes, the most desirable and happy place for the whole family, this side of their final resting-place in the paradise of God. This does not depend, necessarily, on an abundance of means, profusion, and display; but on what is possessed, however limited, being adapted to the real, not imaginary, wants and comforts of the family; plain, neat, and in its proper place. But more especially is home rendered desirable, and even delightful, by the sweetness of temper and the spirit of kindness that pervade and prevail in the household.

No gifts of nature, or Providence; no attainments in knowledge; no refinements of art, can supply the place of, or atone for, the absence of those moral virtues—affection and kindness—in the domestic circle. Parents should make it matter of special prayer to God, that those virtues

may so richly abound in their own bosoms, that they may be fully enabled, by precept and example, to teach the same lesson of love to, and diffuse the same spirit through, the whole domestic charge. Furthermore, the mind must be supplied with appropriate food and nourishment. Hence, it is the imperative duty of parents, as well for their final salvation as to render home pleasant, to furnish their families with reading matter of a sound, moral, and religious character, suited to their age, talents, and enlightened taste; but *exclude novels from your house, as you would the poison of serpents, or the angel of death!* A carefully-selected family library, though the want of means may limit it to a few small volumes, is an indispensable part of household instruction, comfort, and mental provision. With the knowledge and due observance of those principles of domestic happiness, home will be, to every member, desirable, interesting, lovely, delightful. It will be to them "*sweet home*" indeed.

It is the absence of this neatness, order, and sweetness of spirit at home, that induces so many children and youth to love every other place better than their own habitation. The want of proper instruction and suitable reading matter at home, leads them to seek entertainment and amusements abroad, and soon to despise home. Woe, to those families who neglect these duties and means of domestic comfort and usefulness, and that expect more happiness abroad than at home—who look upon home, chiefly, as a place of perplexity, toil, and cares: to be dreaded as a kind of prison, that is to be escaped from as long and often as possible: a sort of workshop, only to be used to fit themselves up to enjoy peace and pleasure abroad, in the party, the fashionable call—in the society and the home of others.

2. *But, further, the obligation of parents, in regard to the education of their children, includes the improvement of their minds, by the light and influence of*

sound science and literature, to the full extent of means and circumstances, and the enlightened taste and capacity of the children. It is not easy to conceive of a stronger obligation resting upon parents than this. They owe it to themselves, for the honor of their names transmitted to their children; to community, for the general good of society; to their children, for their well-being and happiness; to God, for the honor and glory of his name. And nothing less than the most useful and sound, practical education, that they are able to procure for their children, will acquit the parents, on this subject, at the bar of judgment. But where are those parents, that have fully discharged their duty in this matter? Not a few are deeply anxious to adorn the persons of, and lay up treasures for, their children on earth, who manifest but little concern for the improvement of their minds, or their fitness for the incorruptible inheritance in heaven. If schemes of accumulating wealth, by increasing the productiveness

of farms and shops, or by improving the quality of their cattle or merchandise, are introduced, they are examined with interest, and patronized with delight; but when the intellectual culture—the improvement of the minds and morals of their immortal offspring is the theme, these same persons turn away with indifference, or repulse it with apparent indignity. Such parents should go in penitency to the throne of mercy, confess their sin, and vow perpetual reformation.

But families may have all the external means of comfort: home may be delightful, and all may love it; the children may be restrained and instructed; their manners and minds may be improved; order and peace may be established, and prevail in the family circle, in all these respects; and so far is all this from coming up to the claims of God upon us, to “serve him with our house,” that the most that can be said, is, that they are only preparatory to this great and glorious work; for, although we can not serve God acceptably

without this domestic peace and order, we may observe all this, and still be without God, and Gospel hope, in the world.

Thirdly. *Hence the great necessity for the use and faithful observance of all the means of grace, instituted for our benefit and salvation by the Author of our being.* Of the private means of grace, or those religious duties which belong particularly to the household,

1. The injunction of the divine Savior, "*Enter into thy closet and shut the door, and there pray to thy Father, who seeth in secret, and he will reward thee openly,*" must be scrupulously regarded, and faithfully practiced, as an indispensable duty. Parents can never acquire the grace of wisdom, hope, patience, perseverance, love, and long-suffering, necessary to qualify them to meet and sustain their high responsibilities, who habitually shun the closet, and neglect secret prayer. But if faithful in communing with God, in this sacred duty, they will not only realize the promised blessing in their own hearts,

but be invested with strength and influence effectually to recommend the same to their families. They will assuredly obtain help from Heaven, in the performance of their interesting and arduous duties; and what appeared painful, or impossible, when viewed from a distance, will prove to be cheering and delightful when reduced into practice. It is not a question yet to be solved whether children can be early taught lessons of prayer and piety to God. The experience of unnumbered multitudes is a standing record of the glorious truth. And what thought can be more delightful to the pious, or what sight more pleasing to Heaven, than that of each member of the godly family, from lisping infancy to venerable age, breathing from the closet their devotions to God? In the fervent conferences of the soul with God through faith in Jesus Christ, in the retirement of the closet, the heart is prepared for his holy worship at the domestic altar.

2. And it should be engraven upon

every heart, that, *regular family prayer, as a private means of grace, is absolutely indispensable, if we would serve the Lord acceptably, with our household.* This part of family religion is of so much importance, and yet so much neglected, or attended to so defectively, that it requires particular attention. The neglect of this duty will vitiate all we may or can do to render an offering to God that will be pleasing in his sight. What will our profession of religion, our respectability as members of the Church, our attendance at the house of worship, our liberality to his cause, our charity for the poor, and all our professed zeal avail us before God, while living in the habitual and willful neglect of a plain Scriptural duty, which lies at the very foundation of honesty in ourselves, justice to our families, and acceptable obedience to God? He has committed to parents, above all others, a talent of influence and authority over their children, for their good and his glory; and if they neglect or refuse to use it for

that purpose, they are dishonestly burying or misusing the Lord's gifts, unjustly withholding from their families what should be employed for their benefit, and can but be offensive to God. O, parents, to whom is confided the high and sacred trust of training your children, by Divine assistance, for a place in heaven, how can you, who neglect the plain duty of regularly worshipping God in your families, meet them and your offended Maker in peace, at the bar of final decision?

But there are those who do not wholly neglect this duty, and yet attend to it so irregularly and inconsistently, that such service can never meet the Divine favor. They easily allow business, company, weariness, want of disposition, and a hundred other trifles, to keep them from the altar of domestic devotion. When this is not the case, and they attempt to attend to this service, it is little less than trifling with sacred things. In the morning, if worship is attended at all, it is in the absence of a part, and often most of the

family. Some are sent on business, others are yet asleep, and others are at their plays and amusements. In the evening, it is no better. Some of the children are absent, the parents know not where. They are out on their evening ramblings; most likely, in idle and corrupt company, taking lessons in vice and the road to ruin. Others have retired to rest, or by drowsiness are unfitted for religious duties. Where such irregularities prevail, if all should happen to be present, there is but little of real devotion in their exercises; they have scarcely the form, and are destitute of the power of godliness. The household have not been taught to think, and feel, that this is a season of solemn and delightful service; that they are in the presence of a heart-searching Lord, and that each member of the family has a deep interest in the worship of God in the domestic circle. But we forbear to enlarge upon these irregularities, leaving all concerned to reflect on them as a means of reformation, while we direct particular

attention to some points, the observance of which is indispensable to a faithful performance of parental Christian duty, under this head. And,

(1.) *It should be the standing rule of the house, that, if possible, every member must be present at family worship, even to the youngest, as soon as they are capable of observing surrounding scenes, and the order of the family at the hour of prayer.* Heads of families can never “serve the Lord with their house,” till this principle is fully established. In its neglect, they will have disorder and confusion. In the observance of it, their children will early learn the important lesson of cheerful submission to parental authority; will acquire habits of conformity to religious order, and the worship of God; will imbibe the spirit of devotion, and grow up under the influence of godliness and the appointed means of grace. To secure this, the time of prayer must be suited to the business and circumstances of the family. In the morning, either before

engaging in the business, or immediately before breakfast. The latter, generally, may be the more convenient time. We never could see the propriety of deferring worship in the family till after breakfast. Go to the throne of heavenly grace for spiritual food, before you supply the body with temporal refreshments. In the evening, the time for worship must be such that all the family can be present and participate in the services.

(2.) *Family worship must be a season of instruction and edification; otherwise, the time is lost.* We do but mock our Maker, and our reason both, in keeping up the mere forms of religion, either in our families or elsewhere, if we are neither made wiser nor better. But, to be instructed and benefited, the reading of the holy Scriptures must constitute a part of the devotions of the family. This is our infallible teacher. This is the unerring rule of faith and practice. Here we learn the character of that glorious Being whom we worship, and the extent of his

claims upon us and ours. Here we see our wants and weaknesses; the dangers to which we are exposed, and how to escape them; the promises of God, and how to lay hold on them by faith. In a word, the Bible is God talking with his creatures, showing them what to shun, and what to do; and teaching them, with more than a parent's care, the living way from the cross to the crown—from earth to glory.

The inquiry may well be made, How can the reading of the word of God be rendered most interesting and profitable, as a part of family worship? In answer to this question, a few suggestions are submitted, which, it is to be hoped, will neither be despised nor neglected, on account of their plainness. Let all who compose the household be furnished with a copy of the holy Scriptures, and unite in reading, one or more verses at a time, from the parent, who conducts, to the youngest member that unites in the devotions of the family. Furthermore, it

should be perfectly understood that while reading, or after the lesson is closed, any member of the family may ask the parents questions or explanations on any point that may present itself to the mind, in the lesson read. Again: the parents leading in these delightful exercises, should frequently give such brief comments and explanations, on those lessons of holy truth and teaching, as they may be able to do. And, beyond all doubt, if they live as near to God as it is their privilege and duty to do, and exercise faith in the Divine promise, "If any lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth liberally to all men [who ask believingly] and upbraideth not," they will be enabled, on all suitable occasions, to impart some useful instructions to their interesting charge—their household Church.

In connection with reading the word of God, to enlighten the mind, singing his praise, to soften and soothe the heart, should constitute a stated part of family worship. Sacred music should be care-

fully cultivated, and all the members should be taught, and required, to unite in singing the praise of God, in the devotions of the family. And, although they may not always be able to sing according to the rules and technicalities of the science, and there may and will be young and inexperienced voices, jarring notes, and discordant sounds, these will neither vitiate the devotions, close the ears of the Savior, nor restrain the descent of the promised blessing. If this delightful and pious exercise were fostered into that maturity of which it is capable, in religious families, it would soon relieve the Churches of the inconsistency and trouble of praising God by proxy, through the agency of a few select, and often hired, singers, who praise the Lord for pay. Each household would then be God's choir, at home; and when such families came together for public worship, they would fill his sanctuary with living praise, that would move and melt the heart of the Church on earth, and gladden the heart of the

Church in heaven. But, furthermore, the worship of God in the family should be,

(3.) *A season of special spiritual benefit, and communion with the Father of our spirits.* To secure access to the throne of heavenly blessings, and enjoy this holy communion, our petitions must be presented to God through faith in the exhaustless merits and prevailing mediation of Jesus Christ, with the deepest reverence and earnestness of soul that grace can enable us to command. Parents must feel that, with their families, they are in the presence of the Searcher of all hearts, and the Judge of all men; that they are transacting business of surpassing interest for eternity: to be repulsed is to be hopelessly undone; to succeed will secure grace to sustain in all the toils and trials of time, and to bring them, finally, home to heaven, and crown them, as families, in the presence, and with the glory of God. But that these devotions in the family may always be interesting,

solemn, profitable, spiritual, and lead the soul into sweet communion and fellowship with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ, through the influence of the Holy Spirit, they should, generally, be short. After reading a portion of the holy Scriptures, with due solemnity and reflection, and singing, with the spirit and with the understanding, a few verses of an appropriate hymn, then from four to six minutes spent in fervently, through the power of living faith, breathing the whole desires of the full soul to God in prayer, according to the spiritual necessities and circumstances of the household, will constitute an offering at the domestic altar that will never be a wearisome task to those who lead the devotions—that will never lose its interest with the family that worship—an offering that God will never turn away without his blessings, and the consolations of his heavenly grace.

(4.) *That domestic piety may be thoroughly cultivated, and the means of grace rendered effectual in the salvation of the*

household, parents should frequently call on the several members who are penitent or pious, to lead in prayer in the devotions of the family. And it can not fail greatly to promote their spiritual interests to hold occasionally, say monthly, or oftener, family prayer meetings, in which each pious member, that is of sufficient age, should, in turn, address the throne and mercy-seat of God. The parents generally should lead in these delightful exercises, and the children follow; mingling appropriate singing with their humble supplications. O, what blessings of heavenly grace have crowned those unostentatious services in the godly family! And who that has united in them has not found and felt the Lord present, and precious to his soul?

To render the morning and evening devotions acceptable to God, and interesting and edifying to the family, the members of the household, at the appointed time, must be convened, and all things pertaining to the solemn services

in perfect order. This duty, and the reward promised to fidelity in its performance, is, by Providence, peculiarly assigned to the mother—the governess of the household. Doubtless, negligence in her department has first embarrassed and deranged, then paralyzed, and finally banished the devotions of the domestic altar. The head of the family comes in at night care-worn and weary—perplexed—disappointed in business of some kind. It has been a day in which every thing appears to have “gone wrong.” He has but little of the spirit of devotion. He finds derangement at home—the books displaced, and the family scattered. And with his present feelings, to get all in order for acceptable devotion, appears a hopeless case. It has been a day of great trial. The enemy has made an assault to discourage and drive him from the means of grace, and from the cross of Christ. The derangement of his house is the *crisis*. He reasons, hesitates, excuses himself in the circumstances, yields,

retires without prayer, and the devil triumphs. The next conflict is sustained with less firmness, on his part, and with more on the part of the foe, till the devotions in the family become irregular, depreciate to a mere form, lose their interest, become a burden, and are finally abandoned.

But if the governess had put her house in order for the evening devotions, the books in their place, the lights brightly burning, the family all present and waiting to read the holy Scriptures, and join in praise and prayer, the whole scene would have been reversed. The circumstances would have pressed the father to the cross; the fires of devotion would have been kindled in his bosom; the snare would have been broken; the soul would have escaped; the foe would have been foiled, and God glorified. As facts powerfully illustrate principles, allow an incident of the kind here :

Some time since, when we were urging this subject on the attention of a congre-

gation, there was a little boy, some ten years old, present, the only one of the family that was at Church on that occasion. His father's house had once been a house of prayer and piety, but both had long been abandoned, and the parents were fearfully fallen. He listened with much interest, and returned home deeply impressed with what had been said concerning a mother's duty in arranging the household for family worship. In the evening, when some began to prepare for retiring to rest, the little boy modestly approached his mother, and, in a tremulous and suppressed tone, addressed her: "Mother, to-day the preacher said that if, before we go to bed to-night, you would set out the stand, with the candle, Bible, and hymn-book on it, and all of us children sit down and be still, father would read, sing, and pray with us. Mother, will you do it?" The mother, rather surprised, replied, "Why, child, what are you talking about? ain't you crazy?" "No, mother; indeed I understood the

preacher to say it." "Go off, child; you are beside yourself." The little missionary, much mortified, but not wholly discouraged, meekly answered, "I know, mother, the minister said so; but if you will not do it I will, and see if father will pray." He then made the arrangements as above, and approached his father, who had not observed what had occurred, and repeated to him what he had stated to his mother concerning the sermon, and added, "I told mother, but she would not do it; I then told her that I would. Now, father, will you pray?" All was silent and solemn; but the child earnestly repeated, "Say, father, will you?" These were circumstances, and this was an appeal, attended by the influence of the Spirit, that a fallen father could not resist. He wept; his heart melted; his conscience smote him, and he exclaimed, "Yes, child, God helping me, I will try to pray!" God heard his prayer; soon reclaimed him and his wife; converted his children, and poured the influences

of the Holy Spirit and his heavenly peace upon the household.

Again: on a subsequent occasion, while enforcing the importance of family worship, and female influence in promoting it, a mother in the congregation, who had been a member of the Church for several years—whose husband, a respectable physician, was unconverted, and, apparently, unconcerned about the salvation of his soul—heard, felt, and resolved to establish worship in her family. She determined to put her house in order, and ask the doctor to pray, and if he declined, that she would bear the cross herself. Accordingly, in the evening, she placed the books on the table; seated the children; had all things in readiness, and then affectionately requested her husband to pray with the family before they retired to rest, modestly reminding him of the great responsibilities that rested upon them, as parents, and the fearful thought of meeting their children in eternity, without teaching them, by example, to

worship God. This reached his heart, but he excused himself on the ground of his unworthiness, and want of experience in the duty of prayer. She then kindly solicited him to read a portion of the holy Scriptures, and added, that she would try and pray. This was so reasonable that he could not decline her request. He read; the Holy Spirit increased his convictions; he felt his responsibilities, and the burden of his sins. The lesson read, all kneeled before the Lord; immediately he commenced pleading for mercy; he prayed; his wife prayed; it was a night of prayer and supplication in the family. Next morning he united with the children of God, and in a few days the Lord converted him, and for years he has been a devoted Christian—a useful member of the Church, and his house has been a house of prayer.

The influence of mothers in promoting piety in their families is almost resistless. God has given them a moral control there, that he has not intrusted even to

angels, and if it is fully brought into requisition, and exerted with a single eye to his glory, Heaven will assuredly crown it with success that will gladden their own hearts, bring salvation to their house, and increase the joy of angels. But alas! a mother's delinquencies, and negligence, will imbitter the whole cup of domestic life, and even death will not terminate the calamity. It is true, indeed, that they are not allowed to distinguish themselves in the political conflicts and strifes of earth; to occupy places in the legislative halls, or contend in a nation's senate; yet, though God has given them a less prominent position, he has assigned them a much nobler work in the world.

God has given them a kind of pre-emption right over the minds and morals of our race. As a general fact, the first and earliest training and molding of the infant and youthful minds are committed to the mother's hand; and the principles then implanted, and the impressions there made, give character to the future man;

and as these lessons are the first learned, they are the last forgotten, or, rather, they are never fully erased from the mind.

It is for them, by divine grace, to impress the tender intellect and conscience of their immortal charge with correct views and feelings of due subordination to proper authority; to teach them the utmost abhorrence of sin; the love and practice of order, virtue, and truth; to lead them with a steady hand, and in the light of a godly example, along the path of practical piety to the cross of Jesus Christ; to teach them, in a word, to live in time for the glories of eternity. The piety, sanctified cheerfulness, and smiles of a mother, constitute the cloudless sun of the whole domestic circle; and with this sweet temper and holy frame of mind, she is constantly the angel of peace to her household; maintaining order and harmony; inspiring and diffusing the same spirit of affection and kindness through all the members; and by a de-

voted mother's influence fitting them for, and leading them up to, the throne of heavenly grace and the bliss of endless glory. But,

3. "*To serve the Lord with our house,*" implies the stated use of all the public means of grace, without which domestic piety must be radically defective. God has organized his Church—established the ministry of his word, the ordinances of his house, and all the public institutions of religion, for the benefit of man; and he requires those who would enjoy the salvation of the Gospel, and be owned by him in the judgment, to honor him in this world, before men, by a public profession of his name, and religion, and a public and faithful observance of all the institutions of his house. This must be done, not by a *part* of the family occasionally, or even constantly, but by the *whole family*. All the members of the household, that are of sufficient age, must, as far as possible, on all proper occasions, especially on the holy Sabbath, publicly

worship God in his own house, and honor him in the assembly of his saints. This is our reasonable service. This God requires, and less than this he will not receive at our hands. But it is both the folly and misfortune of fallen men, either to deny the claims of God upon them, or, if they admit the obligation, to view it as a burden, and study to bear as little of it as possible, without wholly forfeiting their character, instead of esteeming it a privilege, and aiming to achieve all they possibly can in and for the cause of God. There are many painful examples of this kind in relation to the duty now under consideration. Not a few parents, even professing to be pious, if they do not deny the obligation publicly to "serve the Lord with their house," are almost wholly delinquent in regard to its performance. When, or where, did you see them with their family publicly honoring Christ and religion? When did you see that family all together in the house of God on the consecrated Sabbath?

As the glory of God, the honor of religion, the peace of families, the prosperity of the Church, and the salvation of souls are involved in this great public duty of Christianity, we can not answer it to our conscience, nor to our God, without, in all plainness, dwelling on it more at large.

(1.) And, possibly, the magnitude of this obligation can not be seen with greater clearness, nor felt with more power, than by contemplating it in contrast with existing delinquencies in regard to its claims. Go to the house of God, and cast your eyes over the assembly, and you may there see the head of the family—the husband—the father—from week to week, and month after month, regularly in his place, apparently serving God in the observance of the public institutions of religion, with great zeal and devotion; but where are his wife and children—his household? They are not there. After the services close, inquire after his family—where they are, and why

they are not at Church, and an indication of ill health, or some evasive answer is all the light you can elicit from him on the subject. But urge the inquiries till you reach the facts, and in numerous instances you will find that the absence of the family from the sanctuary of religion, on the holy Sabbath, is traceable to the delinquency of the governor and head of his household. You will find a husband—a father—professing godliness, shamefully neglecting the highest, the endless interests of the wife of his bosom, his dear children, and those committed to his care. He who should be first to sacrifice his own convenience for the well-being of his family, and foremost to meet and bear domestic cares and responsibilities, to promote their salvation, is the first to shun and throw off those cares, and wholly to monopolize privileges to himself at the sacrifice of justice, honor, and the sacred interests of his house. Such is this neglect in not a few instances, that the wife—the mother—destitute of suita-

ble apparel to attend in the house of worship, burdened with the cares and toils of the domestic charge, pressed with the hand of poverty, is doomed, by a delinquent husband, to a species of perpetual imprisonment at home, from which she can not escape, even for an hour, on the Sabbath, to worship God with his saints. Does that man “serve the Lord with his house?” Is he not supremely selfish? and is not his religion vain? Circumstances may, indeed, be such that all can not leave home at once to attend Church or elsewhere. Sacrifices have to be made; but in all such cases it is the imperative duty, as well as the honorable privilege, of the husband—the head of the family—fully to share those inconveniences and privations with his wife; and to see to it, that she has secured to her the full proportion of her religious privileges, both at home and in the house of God. The man who does not feel as deep an interest for the salvation of his wife in heaven, and who is not willing to

make every sacrifice, and put forth every effort for that object that he would for his own salvation, slanders the Christian husband—is not worthy the name of his sex, and his religion is more nearly allied to barbarism than to the cross of Jesus Christ. God has settled the question of man in this relation, with a clearness and point, that no comment can make plainer: “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it;” “So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies;” “Let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself.” This is the principle that should glow in the heart and live in the bosom of every honorable man, to say nothing about Christianity, and by it men who sustain this relation will be judged in eternity.

(2.) But this ruinous neglect of relative duties is not confined to *men* who have taken upon them the relations of heads of families; for, in too many instances, the scene is reversed, and the professing

wife and *mother* may be seen with commendable regularity in the house of prayer, with the worshiping assembly, but in the constant absence of her family from this public means of grace. Is their absence the result of negligence? Has she done all in her power, as a Christian mother, to correct this irregularity and reform the evil? In answer, it will be found that whatever may be the favorable appearances of her piety abroad, at home, instead of diffusing the benign influences of dignified Christian example through the domestic circle, she spends much more time in complaining of real or imaginary difficulties, than in prayer for grace to overcome them. Much more of the spirit of fretfulness is evinced, than of meekness and patience. Her conversation, frequently, is much more calculated to provoke to anger, than to instruct and win to Christ. She has a much stronger desire to get away from domestic difficulties than, as far as possible, to diminish or remove them by reforming improprie-

ties—promoting peace, piety, and happiness in her household. Hence, she always bases her imperative claims to seek privileges and enjoy the means of grace abroad on her insufferable privations at home. And, although, with proper attention, on her part, to the interests of the family, they might together all attend the house of God, she waits with impatience for the day and hour to arrive, when she may break away from all domestic cares, and hurry off alone to the place of religious worship. At home, her religion—if it deserves the name—assumes a complaining, sour, selfish character, and whatever may be its influence abroad, in her own family it is much more calculated to make skeptics in religion than converts to the meek and lowly Savior. It is not because we derive pleasure from dwelling on the weaknesses or wickedness of any of our race that we mention these things, but from an abiding sense of duty, and an ardent desire to reform delinquencies.

And in this case, as well as that of the husband, we can not suppress the conviction, that the wife who does not feel the same solicitude, and make the same sacrifices and efforts, for the salvation of her husband—her household—that she would for her own, has yet to learn one of the first lessons of Christian duty; and whatever may be her profession or pretensions to piety, she can never honor the cause of Christ. As God has opened wide the stores of his grace to her faith, and promised richly Divine assistance, he requires much at her hands with regard to the salvation of her house. “For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband?” “That if any [husbands] obey not the word, they also may, without the word, be won by the conversation of the wives.”

It would be cause of gratitude, if we could here close the list of domestic delinquencies, with regard to the public institutions of religion; but duty compels us to direct attention to another, and, if

possible, still greater evil than those just noticed ; namely,

(3.) *The fearful neglect of parents to take their children with them, on the holy Sabbath, to the house of God.* If this evil could be fully presented, in all its magnitude, it would be perfectly appalling. Such parents appear to look no further than their own personal convenience, in the release, for the time being, from the cares of the family. They are regularly at Church on the Sabbath, while their children, uninstructed and unrestrained, as regularly desecrate, and spend the day in folly and wickedness. It is difficult to conceive of a greater absurdity, or an evil more to be deplored, than that of professing parents, apparently serving God, in his sanctuary on the day of sacred rest, and their immortal offspring, not only not accompanying them, but wholly neglected, and, with either their direct or implied consent, making the blessed Sabbath a day entirely devoted to sinful pleasures. See those neglected children,

from the little, tottering boy on the streets, with his marbles, learning to gamble and blaspheme, to those farther advanced in life, who think themselves almost men and women, utterly neglecting the public means of grace, and spending the day which God has rendered sacred, and consecrated to his own service, in fashionable and sinful visiting, unholy amusements, shooting, hunting, fishing, gaming, and drunkenness; provoking the frowns of almighty God upon themselves, and the guilty parents who have not restrained and taught them better. And who are guiltless, in this case? Who, if now "weighed in the balance," would not be "found wanting?" God has a controversy with parents, on this subject; and, sooner or later, they will be called to an account, and, without speedy reformation, fearful must be the consequences. Such parents appear to be blind to their own, and the real interests of their families, and seem to study to reach the summit of inconsistency. They are deeply anxious to accu-

mulate the means of temporal comfort for their children; have ample means provided to convey their produce to market with the least delay, and at the right time to secure the highest prices, while there is little or no concern for the salvation of their children's souls; no provision made to convey their families to the church, on the Sabbath; and if their neglected children were even to propose to accompany them to the house of prayer, in many instances, they would be taken by surprise, and would object, that their apparel was not suitable, and that there was no convenient means of conveyance to the place of divine worship. All this, too, would be nothing less than a tacit confession of their own delinquencies, as parents, and the little regard they had for the eternal well-being of the immortal souls committed to their care.

And now, with these evils fully before our eyes, it can not be difficult to determine what must be done, to correct and reform them, and to bring ourselves and

families to the standard, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." The parents—the united head—must, also, in this case, be deeply impressed with a sense of their obligations and duties; and they must be firmly resolved, in the strength of divine grace, to meet, and faithfully to discharge all their duties and responsibilities to God, their families, and themselves. There must be not only a unity of conviction of their importance, but, also, an entire unanimity of effort to carry out all those works and plans of piety, which are implied in, and belong to, serving the Lord, with our household.

1. This eminently includes parental example, in maintaining that meekness and fervor of Christian spirit and temper of mind that are alike the ornament, comfort, and sweetness of the whole domestic circle. Without these virtues, all other efforts will be unavailing.

2. It, furthermore, includes that patient and watchful piety, that never fails to impart proper lessons of instruction, on the

importance of shunning wicked associations, and of attending on the ministry of the Gospel, among the people of God. The occurrences and incidents of every day, may furnish occasion for, and may be improved into instructions of this kind, suited to the circumstances and capacities of the family, which, with the blessing of God, will make them "wise unto salvation." And in the holy Scriptures, the infallible source of all truth, the faithful parents will find exhaustless variety of instructive incident, suited to the various conditions of every member of the household, from stammering infancy to inexperienced youth, and mature age. But,

3. It implies that active, persevering piety, on the part of parents, which guards with vigilance the path of duty, both for themselves and their families; ever watchful, and ready to remove hinderances out of the way of duty, by explaining imaginary difficulties, and by presenting real ones in their true character; thereby diminishing the fear of the cross, and en-

couraging the hopes of those who have, as yet, but little experience in the things of religion. This work includes,

4. The imperative duty of parents to furnish every facility possible for their families regularly to attend the public means of grace. The neglect of this, small a matter as it may seem to be, has, no doubt, laid the foundation, in thousands of instances, for the desecration of the Sabbath, the ruin of families, and the hopeless perdition of souls. It can not be too deeply engraven upon the hearts and consciences of all concerned, that God requires parents to serve him with their household or families; that is, to perform all the duties and obligations of Christianity, which he has instituted, and made obligatory upon them, according to their several relations, age, knowledge, and capacities; and that, among those Christian duties stands, prominently, that of his public worship, in the assembly of the saints. Consequently, till parents have done all that is in their power to bring their

children, servants, and all that appertain to their domestic charge to the Lord, in the observance of his own institutions, and, particularly, the acknowledging of him in his own house, among his people, their religion is assuredly defective, and they are most fearfully delinquent in the sight of God. And especially should parents avail themselves of the advantages of Sabbath schools, as the great auxiliary of the Church, to aid them in bringing their families to Christ, and to the kingdom of heaven.

The unquestionable obligation, inestimable privilege, untold utility and importance of social religious worship, in a congregational capacity, has been acknowledged by the Church, in all places, and in every period of her history. And so scrupulous have been the pious in observing this divine institution, especially when walking in, and nearest to, the light of apostolic example, and when the Church was most distinguished for simplicity and piety, that thousands, even when borne

down by the hand of despotism and persecution, have assembled in caves, and secluded places in the mountains, at the hour of midnight, and that, too, at the peril of their property, liberty, and lives, to receive the word of exhortation and comfort—to rejoice in the communion and fellowship of the saints, and devoutly to worship God, their present and all-sufficient Savior. And not a few, for their ardent zeal and invincible faithfulness in this branch of Christian duty, were doomed to suffer death by martyrdom, in its most appalling forms. As neither the claims of God nor the character of religion has changed, to conform to the one, and enjoy the other, children must accompany their parents to the house of social and divine worship, and by this, and all other means, be restrained from evil associations and practices, that have spread moral desolation through the world, and be brought into the worshiping assembly, and under the influence and teachings of the Gospel of Christ, and the faithful prayers of the

Church. And not till parents fully acquit themselves to their own consciences and to their God, in regard to this duty, can they, with faith and confidence, pray for, or expect the conversion of their children—their families; much less can they rationally hope to see them die in peace, or to meet them in the kingdom of endless blessedness, in the final judgment.

PART III.

"Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come,"
1 TIMOTHY IV, 8.

III. In directing attention to some of the considerations that should prompt to holy diligence in the great work of serving the Lord with our household, the chief difficulty is, to make a judicious selection, that can be presented in a condensed form, from the almost infinite variety that lies all around us, and of which the world is full. Motives, vast as the human mind can conceive of, cluster around, and press upon us, from the world beneath, around, and above us; from time past, time passing, and from the immense, the untold, the infinite future. But time and circumstance forbid our doing more than name a *few* of them.

1. *The first that we mention, and the lowest that should ever occupy the minds of parents in this connection, is of a pecuniary character, affecting their interests*

principally in this world. To name this as a motive to domestic piety, is allowable only in view of the fact that the lawful acquisition and proper application of pecuniary means is not only a source of admissible Christian comfort in this life, but may greatly increase the usefulness of the pious, by extending the means and agencies of the Gospel, for the salvation of others—the salvation of a ruined world—and thereby, also, of glorifying God; and, furthermore, from the fact that repeated and powerful appeals are made, by the enemies of religion, to the avarice and cupidity of fallen human nature, to prevent men from devoting themselves to the service of God. Church expenses; the erection of houses of worship; the support of the “priesthood,” as it is contemptuously called; sustaining the various benevolent institutions—Bible, tract, and Sabbath school societies; the immense expense of the missionary cause, consuming its millions by the year, are all arrayed in fearful, and frequently in

exaggerated colors before their minds; and every passion of their covetous hearts is eloquently addressed, either directly, or by ingenious insinuations, warning them of the privations of poverty, if they become pious; and inviting them to the distinctions and luxuries of wealth, on condition that they abstain from the cross of Christ—the service of God; and especially with their household or family. And, doubtless, not a few are taken in this snare of Satan, transformed into an angel of light, and are well pleased with, love, and cherish the dreadful delusion, till the providence of God arrests them, and the resistless stroke of death breaks the fatal spell, and reveals to them their consummate folly, when it is hopelessly too late to mitigate, or escape its consequences.

But what are some of the facts in this case? No one needs to be told that depravity and irreligion, both in the case of individuals and families, are frequently found in connection with, if they are not

directly the cause of such a degree of indolence and recklessness of means, as to lead to the most abject poverty and wretchedness. On the other hand, where these consequences do not follow, not unfrequently extravagance and excess reign, without restraint or reason. Look abroad upon the operations of human society, and witness the unnumbered millions that are annually expended, either for the direct support of sinful practices, or to prevent or remedy the evils that flow from those sources—those fountains of depravity and crime! Take, in the range of observation, the theater, the gambling and grog-shops, the state-prisons, and houses of infamy; also, the less repulsive sources of sin and expenditure. Look at the expenses of the hosts of police-officers, and the criminal jurisprudence; and then the cases of individual and domestic extravagance; the costly, fashionable apparel and furniture; the perfectly useless, but expensive, gay, and ungodly ornaments; see the thousands of families, claiming that

kind and degree of refinement and elevation of character that, in their view, almost wholly exempt them from the claims of Christianity, maintaining their present pretensions, display, fashion, and folly, at the fearful cost of certain bankruptcy in the future. Then behold their end, in the melancholy wreck of families who have gone before them in the same scenes of extravagance and sin; the broken fragments, in the person of profligate and prodigal children, in almost vagabond form, floating down the stream of time, a moral pest in community, and a solemn warning to all who neglect the cross of Christ, and the crown of life, for the follies of earth and the pleasures of sin, and then talk about Church expenses, the cost of religion—then talk about fleeing from the precincts of the sanctuary of God, as the surest, if not the only means of avoiding poverty and bankruptcy.

But fearful and indescribable as are those consequences of human folly and sin, in reference to God's temporal bless-

ings, it is not claiming too much for religion when it is announced as the *infallible* remedy for them all; “for godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” This fact is fully demonstrated in the history of the truly religious, as the result of serving God with their household. And the reasons are obvious.

(1.) For an invariable fruit of genuine piety is *habitual industry*, and the studious improvement of precious time, for the glory of God, in the well-being and salvation of man. Indolence is as irreconcilable and incompatible with Scriptural piety as darkness with light, falsehood with truth, or profanity with godliness! And while the Bible is revered as the record of God in this case, there can be no more difficulty in determining to what class the *lazy man* belongs, than in deciding the character of “the tree, by the fruit which it bears.”

(2.) True piety produces *economy in the*

application and use of means—the temporal blessings of the Author of our being. It makes the word of God the rule of its expenditures; and this prohibits all useless ornament of person, all unnecessary and costly display of furniture, carriages, and equipages of every kind. The members of the enlightened, consistent, Christian family, in these, and all other matters requiring the application of means and money, recognize themselves as stewards of the Lord, and accountable to him, in the great day of final retribution, for this trust confided to their care. Consequently, they use and apply all those means in the fear of God, with a single eye to his glory, their own responsibility, the advancement of his cause in the earth, and the salvation of mankind in heaven.

(3.) What is of still greater importance is, that they have *the promises of the special blessings of God upon the labors of their hand*. “The hand of the diligent maketh rich;” and, “thou shalt eat the labor of thy hands: happy shalt thou

be, and it shall be well with thee." Again: "They shall be blessed in their basket and their store, their flocks and herds; in the works of their hands; in their going out, and their incoming;" and also in their souls and bodies, and in their families, in this and in the life to come. Who can conceive of any condition more desirable, this side of the final resting-place of the pious, in heaven, than is here promised to the faithful families and people of God? They have set out for the kingdom, on the great principle, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." They have not contemplated it as a mere theory, name, or form; but as a Divine rule—a Divine obligation and sacred duty, involving all their real comforts and happiness, in this and the future world, in time and eternity. Deeply impressed with its importance, they have reduced it into diligent practice, and have fully tested the divinity of the promises; and that God accepts, through the Son of his love, the humble offering of the de-

voted family, has become a vital element of their daily experience. They have learned, in a manner not to be questioned, that the household, fully consecrated to God, is honored with the abiding presence of the Prince of peace. From this hallowed source, they derive that refined, intellectual, and spiritual bliss, which the whole range of mere earthly amusements can never impart. They have comforts, happiness, rich, abundant, full, divine, at home; and when they go abroad, it is not to seek from the joys of earth "to fill an aching void within;" but, in obedience to the calls of Christian duty, that they may glorify God, in diffusing among others the influence of that salvation in which they rejoice, in sure and certain hope of a blessed immortality in heaven.

Whatever may be their circumstances, in other respects, "they are rich in faith, and heirs of an incorruptible inheritance, reserved for them, at the right hand of God." Their enjoyment depends not on the position assigned them in society, by

the arbitrary rules of refinement or dignity of character, prescribed in the codes of distinction adopted by the children of this world; nor in the profusion of personal decorations, the splendor of parlors, the honors of office, the glories of power, or the delusions of wealth. These are all trifles, that have lost their attractions, in the light of the glorious Gospel of the Son of God—have lost their potency over hearts renewed by the power of the Holy Spirit; hearts detached from the objects of earth; bearing the image of their Savior; filled with the love of God; all their affections sanctified, and wholly concentrated on him, as the exhaustless source of salvation and glory.

Hence, when viewed in the true light, it ceases to be matter of surprise, that families, reduced to poverty and want by indolence, excess, and sin, when they turn to God, and make his service, and enjoyment domestically, the end for which they live, should increase in means and temporal comforts, and fully realize the prom-

ise that "godliness is profitable unto all things." But all this might pass for nothing more than some beautiful theory, or pleasing speculation on a fine subject, were it not for the undeniable fact that the Gospel furnishes so many families, disenthralled, elevated, and bearing the image of Christ, as the trophies of its own glorious victories. We can scarcely survey Christian communities from any point, but we behold individuals and families who, previous to their conversion to God, were bankrupt, not only in their purse and property, but in character, reputation, public confidence, and morals; but, when they embraced Christ, as their only Savior, and consecrated themselves wholly to the service of God, they have, by divine grace, arisen into favor and confidence with both God and man; regenerated in heart, character, and circumstances, they occupy important and useful stations in civil society and in the Church of Christ—living witnesses of the glorious fact that "old things have passed away, and behold all things

have become new," as the happy result, under the provisions of the Gospel, of "serving the Lord with their whole house."

2. *The principle of justice demands of parents that they "serve God with their families."* The law of *nature* makes it the first duty of parents to consult the best interests of their offspring, by maintaining, protecting, and educating them. And even where the light of revelation has not shown, and where these interests are supposed to consist chiefly in the use of the bow, and the pursuits and achievements of the chase, this duty of parents can not be neglected, without the sin of injustice to their children, by violating this law of nature.

But to those to whom God speaks in his revealed will, "And ye parents provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," and, "Train up your children in the way they should go: and when they are old, they will not depart

from it;" the obligation to seek, not only the temporal, but, also, the spiritual and eternal interests of their families, is as plain and imperative as the precept is clear and divine. And to neglect their duties must be an act of gross injustice to their children, who have a right to demand, and, in all justice, are entitled to receive what God has commanded parents to impart to, and perform for, them. This case is perfectly clear in matters pertaining to this life only. By common consent, the parents who, by prodigality and excess, needlessly waste their temporal substance, neglecting to provide for, and thereby reduce their children to poverty, with all its inconveniences and consequences, are pronounced unjust to their offspring, and guilty of an outrage upon their best worldly interests. But this injustice is greatly aggravated, when means have been intrusted, by others, in the hands of parents for the future well-being of their children, and they have not only neglected to make this provision

themselves, but have misapplied and totally wasted the means of comfort and happiness that others have provided for them.

But who can estimate the claims of justice upon parents, in a moral point of view, to promote the spiritual interests of their children, by serving God with their families, when the great trust confided to them for that specific object is calmly considered? It has already been seen that, in the order of Providence, they sustain relations to their children that none others do or can, and that these relations invest them with an authority, and secure to them an influence, that God has withheld from all others in regard to their families. Hence, to them is committed, in a singular and eminent degree, the interests and happiness of their families in this and the world to come. God can not require less, at their hands, than that they employ and apply all those advantages and influences for the purposes for which they were given, namely,

to train their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord—to train them for usefulness here and heaven hereafter. Nothing less than the prudent exercise of parental authority, the faithful application of the moral principles of the Gospel, the regular use of all the means of grace, and the light of their humble Christian example steadily illuminating their household—all tending to the same great object—the glory of God in the promotion of domestic piety, and the final salvation of their families, can possibly exempt them from the awful charge of cruel injustice to their immortal offspring. And the fact that the children, from incapacity, inexperience, ignorance, or any other cause, may not see this obligation of parents, nor demand its fulfillment, does, by no means, extenuate, but must fearfully aggravate, the delinquency and augment their perdition for the neglect.

The strength of those claims will be seen with increased clearness in consider-

ing still further the power of *parental example* over their household. This may be seen in every department of human society; and the effects of this influence are not transient and momentary, but, most generally, they are permanent and durable. Parental example draws its lines deep, and, frequently, indelible, giving a bias to the tender mind that grows through life, developing, in manhood and age, the impressions received from this source in childhood and youth, and bearing into eternity those characteristics thus received in time. There are, doubtless, those now in the paradise of God, who, in their holy habitation, recognize such parental example and influence as the powerful means, under God, of awakening them to a sense of their sin and danger of endless death—of bringing them to the cross of Christ, and from the cross to the crown of glory; and, at the same time, and in the same light, see that in all this the parents did no more than what was their imperative duty—no more

than what justice required of them, and that to have done less would have been ruinous injustice to their children, to themselves, and to their God.

On the other hand, the evidence is too clear to be resisted, that there are those who, from the prison of hopeless perdition, see that the example of ungodly parents was one of the fearful agencies of their final ruin, and through all eternity may charge them with unmitigated injustice, as the agents of the endless anguish of those whom they were the instruments of bringing into being. O, what a solemn thought! But who appreciates the responsibility that parents, in all their conduct and conversation, in the spirit they diffuse, and the entire example they exhibit in the domestic circle, are making impressions and forming characters for heaven or hell? In view of these facts, all who have overlooked or placed these considerations among the ordinary concerns of life, should awake to their duty without a moment's delay. Divine Jus-

tice can not be trifled with—will not always slumber. God is not “a hard master, reaping where he has not sown.” For, while he has committed to parents high, honorable, and important trusts, involving the best interests of man and his own glory, he has richly illuminated the path of their duty by the light of revelation, and encouraged their hope by the promised help of almighty grace. He visits their hearts by the operations of the Holy Spirit, and proffers them heaven as the *gracious* reward of faithfulness in his work on earth. But it is a melancholy fact that, even under these gracious circumstances, with so many powerful motives to duty, many have not merely buried their talents, by neglecting the reasonable obligations of Christianity, but have fearfully perverted them, by turning the whole weight of the influence of their example in their families against religion and the cross of Christ, and are thereby presumptuously leading down to perdition those whom, by all possible dili-

gence, under God, they should strive to conduct to heaven. Who will be able, in the final judgment, to meet the consequences of such folly and madness in time? Divine Justice watches with an impartial eye, and demands action—immediate action. Parents have already slumbered too long, and their delinquencies have, for years, been crying to heaven against them. There is not a moment now to lose. God requires reformation, and that they bring their children—their whole families—in the arms of fervent prayer; and that, by the hands of living faith, they present them before the throne of heavenly grace, and in the light of their own example, and by his exhaustless strength they gather their household home to heaven.

3. *The principle of benevolence should prompt parents to the most careful cultivation of domestic piety.* While justice requires men impartially to render to all their due, or what they have a right to demand, and unconditionally condemns

for withholding or misapplying what belongs to, or should be used for, the benefit of others, *benevolence* can still go beyond and impart favors that justice can not demand, but does not censure or forbid. Benevolence is that virtue, or principle, in the renewed heart, that not only recoils at the idea of inflicting wrong upon any being, but which ardently desires and promptly seeks, in the use of all lawful and suitable means, the felicity of all creatures capable of enjoying, and for which God has provided comfort and happiness. The greatest efforts of enlightened benevolence will be directed to the objects where there is the most rational prospect of success; and with parents entertaining correct views of this subject, those objects will first be found at home, in the members of their own families. It is not difficult to awaken in the bosom of reflecting parents deep solicitude for the comfort and well-being of their children in this world. They call to their aid the experience of the past,

their knowledge of the present, and their most skillful anticipations of the future, in order to secure the objects of their tender regard—their children—against temporal privations, and to procure for them the blessings of this short life. But true benevolence, daily surrounded with those interesting objects most calculated to kindle this divine virtue to a holy flame, while it is neither a stranger to this anxiety for inferior blessings, nor indifferent with regard to their attainment, looks far beyond to treasures—spiritual, enduring, and divine—and seeks them with a zeal and energy worthy their own glorious magnitude, and the worth of the immortal souls for whom they are sought.

As active benevolence is alike a practical evidence and living fruit of genuine piety, it is difficult to conceive of a greater inconsistency than for parents to profess the latter and be destitute of the former, particularly with regard to their families, in reference to whom God has furnished them with so many facilities for

usefulness. But many, who are deeply involved in this inconsistency, would deem it unpardonable severity to be pronounced destitute of the grace of benevolence toward their household. They claim earnestly to deprecate their suffering, and ardently to desire their salvation. Taking them, then, on their own profession, let them answer, in the name of reason—in the name of Christian candor—in the name of God—whether they can sit down in the midst of their dear children, and look around upon their lovely families, and recollect that they have chosen that highly-responsible relation which made them the instruments of their earthly existence, either to be heirs of the joys of heaven, or the sorrows of hell? and whether they can see them, with every step, and with every breath, hastening on to the tomb and eternity—an eternity of blessedness or woe, and not feel their hearts moved with the tenderest emotions, and penetrated with the deepest solicitude for their salvation? If they

can survey this moving scene, and indulge those solemn reflections, and contemplate the meeting of their families at the bar of God without the benevolence of their hearts being stirred up to a flame that will almost consume them in its fervor, and without resolving, if they have never done it before, "as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord," they have awful reason to fear that their "*religion is vain*," and that they are "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin," and are leading their families down to the horrors of the second death, where the blood of their morally-murdered offspring will be found in their skirts.

4. *Parents should be induced to serve the Lord, with their household, by that divine principle—love.* For the wisest and best of purposes, man has been endowed, by the Author of his being, with the capacity to love. And although the philosophy may not be easily defined, or explained, its exercise is so universal that the fact that man can and does love vari-

ous objects, has become a common element of experience, and is sufficiently intelligible for all practical purposes. Ordinarily this affection of the heart is excited by surrounding and external objects of beauty and congeniality to the taste, views, feelings, and habits of mind. Parents, generally, from the natural relation to, and connection with, their children, see beauty of person, sprightliness of mind, or development of intellect, that renders them objects of love.

Men of profound thought and deep research into the different departments of nature, while contemplating the sublime exhibition of the perfections of God—his infinite wisdom, power, and goodness in creation and providence—feel that he is an object of love, and, generally, profess to love him. But all this profession is rather an extorted confession of their judgment, with regard to duty, than the ardent affection of their hearts in its performance. For it is the solemn declaration of the Bible, as humiliating to the

pride of the depraved human heart as the announcement is divine and true, that the "*carnal mind is enmity against God.*" Consequently, unrenewed by the power of the Holy Spirit, fallen man never can love God in that evangelical sense which is absolutely indispensable to Scriptural piety; and any conclusion to the contrary, is but a species of ruinous self-delusion. Hence, while it is the imperative duty of parents to serve God with their house, and while love is the vital principle in this great work, and without which it is madness even to dream of success, they must look beyond themselves, to the fullness of the atonement of Jesus Christ, for this heavenly principle—this divine qualification. It is of the first importance, both to the parents, who must act in the premises, and the family whom, instrumentally, they should lead to God, that this subject be clearly understood. That love which, through the merits and mediation of Christ, must commend them to God, prepare them for,

and assist them in bringing their children to, the cross, is not the promptings of merely-external objects through the medium of sense or sight, but it is impressed upon, and wrought in, the heart, through the power of living faith and the renewing of the Holy Spirit.

As a blessing, purchased by the sacrificial death and boundless merits of the Savior, a degree of divine grace is unconditionally given to every man to enlighten his mind, affect his heart, and arouse his conscience to a sense of guilt, by reason of his personal depravity and willful wickedness in the sight of God. In the light of this grace, cordially received and honestly improved, he will be led clearly to see, and deeply to feel his perilous and undone condition in consequence of sin—his total unpreparedness to die—his entire unfitness for an association with the saved in heaven—his utter inability to escape this peril by renewing his own heart or changing his moral nature. He sees, also, that men and angels

are equally impotent, with himself, to remove the guilt from his soul, the burden from his heart, or to restore him to the favor of an offended God. In the same light, he sees that the infinite holiness and justice of God could not do less than to hold him in abhorrence while in rebellion against his Maker. He feels, indeed, that his position is fearful, and his case almost hopeless. Condemned by the law of God; condemned by the Divine perfections; condemned by the piety of the saints—the virtues of the good; condemned at the bar of his conscience—deeply self-condemned; exposed every moment to the shafts of death, and in danger of going down quickly to hell, he exclaims, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” But just at the point where it seems to him all must be lost, the declarations of Divine grace, and the promises of God’s mercy, address themselves to his anguished mind: “As I live, saith Jehovah, I have no pleasure in the death of the sin-

ner;" "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life;" "Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man;" "He bore our sins in his own body on the tree;" "That God might be just and the justifier of every one that believeth in Jesus;" "Son, give me thy heart;" "Whosoever cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." The whole Divine character assumes a new aspect. "God, manifest in the flesh," now, indeed, appears to the eyes of his trembling faith "the fairest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely," and by that humble, confiding faith which includes reformation, repentance, and entire consecration to the service of God, he lays hold on Christ, in all his offices and character, as his only, all-sufficient, present, willing, and almighty Savior. God accepts the offering, through the Son of his love; the Holy Spirit applies the blood of atonement to the washing the guilt of sin from

his conscience; regenerates his soul, and renews him in the glorious, moral image of Jesus Christ, and inspires in and fills his new heart with that *love* which is “sweeter than life and stronger than death.” This love, in its *practical operations*, not merely enkindles in the heart an esteem or affection for religion, but constitutes its living soul, and the sum and fullness of Christian duties; for “love is the fulfillment of the whole law.” Now, taught by the holy Scriptures, and no longer walking by sight but by faith, he sees the whole Divine character, in the person of Jesus Christ, in such a light as to command the supreme affection of his whole heart. He thus beholds him in consequence of what *he is in himself*. Each of his perfections presents an infinity of loveliness, and when contemplated together, by faith, they are sweetly and sublimely overwhelming—what he has done for him in creating, preserving, and redeeming him; what he has accomplished in him, in saving him from the love,

the practice, the guilt, and the power of sin; and what he has prepared for him in the future—deliverance from all the ills of earth and time—a crown, a throne, a kingdom, and an eternal weight of glory with himself in heaven.

Who will not pause and inquire, with an anxiety and ardor deep and earnest as the human soul can bear, whether they possess this heavenly treasure of divine love? This love, which is but another term for pure religion, as an *effect*, bears the impress of its holy *cause*, and displays the divinity of its origin in the manner in which it performs the work assigned it by its author. For, unlike the sordid love of the unrenewed heart, it is not excited and attracted to its objects by the gayety of the earth, or the “glory of man;” nor is it repulsed by the shades of obscurity, the gloom of ignorance, the privations of poverty, or the anguish of sufferings. Unmoved by mere contingencies and distinctions like these, which must all soon be merged, mingled,

and lost in the tomb, it penetrates the vail of appearances, passes beyond external circumstances, and selects its objects with reference to intrinsic worth, and importance of character and nature.

Hence, wherever it finds intelligence which either loves and enjoys God, or that may be brought into that moral state, it finds an object of its sacred regard. It is on this principle that the true Christian, whose heart is fully under the Divine influence, not only loves with delight the pious and good, but with *pity* the irreligious and vile, without regard to moral character or temporal circumstances; for, though now in a state of revolt and rebellion against the Author of their being, they possess intellect and immortality, which, if they will yield to divine grace, may be reclaimed to God, employed in his service, filled with his love, and crowned with his glory forever. The Christian, with peculiar feelings of tenderness, sympathy, and pity, loves their souls, and ardently desires, and faithfully

labors for their salvation in heaven. This love is an active principle, constituting alike the ornament and peace of its possessor, and the energy and soul of all active benevolence and holy Christian enterprise. While Christians are prompted by its power to the greatest efforts for the advancement of the cause of Christ, and while their hearts glow with fervent charity for all men who are within the reach of divine mercy, they are not the victims of a blind zeal, neglecting what is practicable, and spending their time, means, and strength, in attempting to accomplish what is beyond their reach; but they select those fields for cultivation which are most accessible, and those objects that are most clearly indicated by the wisdom of Providence. The well-informed Christian parents, therefore, can be at no loss to know where to commence this great work for their Master. Those fields are found near their own fireside—those objects are their own immortal offspring; and motives, high as heaven, and far

deeper than the grave, appeal to their Christian love, their love of souls, their love of the souls of their own dear families, to awake to this work in earnest, and prosecute it in the name and strength of Jesus Christ, to its final consummation. We have neither time nor disposition now to discuss that cold-hearted, or, rather, *heartless* heresy, that parents are to feel no more desire, anxiety, or love, for the salvation of their children, than for the veriest stranger of our race! It is treason against the order God has established in the domestic circle, the relation he has ordained between parents and children, the imperative duties he requires of parents, and the very constitution and nature he has given them. The mildest verdict that can be rendered against it is, that as it has no authority from the divine record, no sympathy with enlightened Christian experience, it should perish from the earth, and never find a lodgment for a moment in the bosom of man. God has implanted the principle in the heart, and

made it the duty of parents to love their children; and so natural and powerful is this affection, till it is fearfully perverted by sin, that its exercise does not depend on the personal attractions of their offspring, but it extends to all, and frequently is most fervent for those who are least the favorites of nature. All this is generally true of unconverted parents; but when the heart is fully renewed in the image of Christ, and every passion of their nature brought under the influence of heavenly grace, and to this natural affection is added the fullness of divine love, they feel, or should feel, an interest and find in their bosom an affection—an inexpressible love for their children, that is only subordinate to their *supreme* love to God. This holy principle carries their contemplations far beyond merely temporal interests and external circumstances, and fixes their attention on the treasure within—the immortal mind and its endless destiny. There they behold an object worthy of their most tender regard, and

untiring vigilance for its eternal well-being—an object for which God has demonstrated his interest, his love, by the gift of his own Son; and Christ, by his teachings, his poverty, tears, toils, agony, bloody sweat, and sacrificial death upon the cross; the Holy Spirit, by his illuminations of the mind, his awakening and wooing influences, his long-suffering, and patient waiting to win the wandering soul to the blood of atonement—to the embraces of the Son of God. This love leads the pious parents to contemplate their children, especially, with reference to the vast and unexplored future, and their capacity for improvement, and their susceptibility of enjoyment or of suffering. Here they see intelligence—mind, which, in despite of all obstructions, rushes back upon the pages of the past, and calls into present audience the events of other years, with a delightful facility that reveals its own inherent energies—intellect and will, that lay the vast volume of nature under contribution, reads its laws and expounds

its mysteries—earth, water, air, light, heat, cold, clouds, storm, and even the lightnings of heaven, are, to a greater or less extent, commanded into submission to man, by the energies of his mind—a mind which, though now imprisoned in clay, and in person confined to a point, can, by the powers of thought, traverse and explore this rolling ball, on which it performs its probation for eternity, with an exercise so slight as scarcely to amount to mental recreation, and with a speed that outstrips the velocity of light; and in sublime adventure, peculiar to itself, rises above its own habitation, and contemplates other spheres, throws its thoughts abroad upon boundless creation, and, prompted by its own constitution, and indulged by the Author of its being, reverently approaches the citizens of the skies, the gates of heaven, and the throne of God!

But those grand exhibitions of thought and contemplation which, with more than electric speed return with their achieve-

ments, and make report to the soul, are but the harbingers of the soul itself; for soon the immortal mind will break from its earthly prison, mount above, and soar in person, far beyond the explorings of thought, and, if prepared by holiness here for the inheritance in heaven, will associate with angels, mingle with the saints in light, and behold, with inexpressible raptures, the unclouded glory of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit! There, every faculty, passion, and element of the soul, will be an avenue and receptacle; and God the infinite fountain, from which all will be filled with that unutterable glory which is peculiar to, and that constitutes heaven; and this boundless bliss, guaranteed by the broad seal of immortality, bearing the signature of Jehovah himself. But such is the marvelous structure of the imperishable mind of man, that reason claims, and revelation concedes—or, rather, revelation, by fair construction, teaches, and sanctified reason rejoices in the fact—that the saint, thus

inducted into heaven, is the possessor and heir of glory, but in *miniature*; and that the expansion of the soul, in probation on earth, from the first emotions of mind in the cradle, till the man stands on the summit, enshrined in all the light of literature and science, then regenerated, and bearing the moral image of the Son of God, closes the scenes of earth, is but a feeble illustration—a faint resemblance of that inconceivably-sublime and incomprehensibly-glorious development of powers, enlargement of capacity, and approach to the perfections of God, which lie before him in the grandeur of heaven, the provisions of immortality, and the glories of eternity. O, the intellect of man! Wonderful gift of God! Almost overwhelmed with a sense of its own greatness—a mystery to itself, as incomprehensible as that of God who gave it—a conscious demonstration of its high origin and undying existence!

But, tremendous thought!—parents, let it fully possess your hearts!—children,

pause and reflect on it!—let the world of mankind pause and ponder it well!—thought that less than an immortal mind could not entertain—that, without repentance and faith—without Scriptural holiness of heart and life in this world, through the atonement of Jesus Christ, those souls of men, with all their matchless powers of progression, and exquisite capacity to feel and suffer, will be forbidden to enter heaven, and will be “turned into hell, where the fire is not quenched, and where their worm dieth not,” to endure, and enhance the anguish of the lost, and experience the accumulating woes that await them, as the progressive results of their own immortality, and the unalterable laws of eternity.

And, O parents, is it the fact that each child belonging to the domestic charge—offspring and image of yourself—possesses such an untold and inestimable treasure, and is, through his or her own sins, and your negligence, inevitably destined to endure the doom of the damned, or, by

your faithfulness, and his or her penitency and salvation from sins, to be exalted to the honors of heaven and the glories of Christ? And do you “love God with a pure heart, fervently;” and can you hesitate, for a moment, to stir up and put forth all your energies, in the strength and prevailing name of the Son of God, to bring your children to the cross, by serving the Lord with all your household? O, think again, of the moral grandeur of this enterprise; the infinite wisdom that has planned it; the infinite goodness and love that have provided the exhaustless means for its accomplishment; the infinite power pledged for its consummation; the authority by which it is undertaken; the motives for its prosecution; the promises of success; the magnitude of the object to be achieved; the perdition that must follow delinquency, and the “eternal weight of glory” in heaven that will crown fidelity and perseverance in their triumphs! Think of all these things, and let them have an abiding place in your

bosoms; and then act. Let the purpose to serve the Lord, domestically, be the unchanging and all-controlling law of your house, till you are called from probation in time to the rewards of glory in eternity.

PART IV.

“If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it,” ISAIAH I, 19, 20.

IV. AN APPEAL TO PARENTS IN REGARD TO THE CONSEQUENCES FOR GOOD OR EVIL WHICH MUST FOLLOW UNFAITHFULNESS OR FIDELITY IN THEIR RELATION.

1. In the progress of this discourse, we have visited the family, walked around the domestic altar, and seen who compose the household—each immortal, and all hastening to the tomb and eternity. We have beheld with awe the solemn obligations which those assume by entering upon that relation which, by the appointment of God, constitutes them heads of families; and that even angels could not perform these obligations for them, and from which God can not release them, nor suffer their neglect with impunity, without abandoning his own moral government. We have also inspected the catalogue of divinely-appointed duties, the discharge of

which is indispensable to meet the measure of his claims upon them; namely, to serve him with their house. We have further witnessed the cloud of motives that appeal to every element of their nature, and to every interest that is dear to them, for time and for eternity. And they must either brook the little less than blasphemy of charging God with exaggeration, by alarming their fears where there is no danger, and exciting their hopes when there is no reward, or allow that this subject admits of no comparison of the magnitude of its importance, nor delay in the performance of its duties. The relations of the domestic circle are not only expressly ordained of God, perpetual and universal in their obligations, but they form the foundation work of the whole superstructure of human society, in all its departments, subdivisions, and aggregate character, affecting, immediately or remotely, for weal or woe, the social, civil, political, temporal, the moral, religious, spiritual, and eternal interests of

our race. These are the springs that flow into, and constitute the great ocean of the world's inhabitants. The households contain and supply the members of which states, nations, kingdoms, empires, and the Church of God are constituted. To these sources must nations look for their senators and rulers, and the Church for her children and teachers. And as God has published the fact, the converse of which is as true as the affirmative, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it," parents may see, and may Heaven help them to feel! the tremendous responsibilities that rest upon them in the case. He would be deemed a hypocrite, or destitute of sense, who would deny that the impressions, habits, and training of childhood and youth, give coloring and cast to the character of the man. Christ's rebuke to the Pharisees is proof in point: "As your fathers have done, so do ye."

As those relations have been established for infinitely wise purposes, those who

enter upon them can not possibly escape the consequences of their responsibilities in these relations. They must meet them, either in the faithful performance of the duties, and the enjoyment of their high and heavenly rewards, or in shame and guilt, and the curse of God for their neglect. The consequences are inevitable; God has ordained them. Delinquencies in domestic duties will grieve the Holy Spirit from your own bosom, drive the Prince of peace from your habitation, blast the best interests of human society, curse the world, multiply the prisoners of the pit, and augment the miseries of the lost forever; while fidelity will reverse the verdict, bring salvation to your own heart and house, secure the peace, protection, and aid of "Emanuel, who is God with us," promote the well-being of man in time, defeat the dissembled angel in his diabolical purposes for the perdition of men, guide, by an example worthy of all imitation, the wandering millions of mankind to the cross and to the crown,

and swell the songs and glories of heaven by the redeemed from the earth.

But look at this subject still further; for each parent and child of the human family has an interest in it, as enduring as immortality, and as changeless as the laws of God; but more especially, if possible, in our heaven-favored, republican America, which claims to have furnished, for the imitation of the world, a model government, pre-eminently “the home of the stranger, and the asylum of the oppressed;” under which we enjoy higher social, civil, and religious privileges than any other portion of this sin-deranged globe, and where the *people* are supreme, and undeniably the sovereign source of all political power. Here, unlike most other subdivisions of the world, there is no standing army of daily-disciplined troops, whose interests are immeasurably removed from those of the masses of the people they essay to protect against invasions from abroad and tumults at home; but, almost without an exception in the

history of nations, they are the means that undermine, the moth and mildew that blast, the instruments of the powers that oppress, the curse that consumes to the dust and to the dregs of poverty the people they pretend to protect. But, strange as the statement may appear, it is, nevertheless, true, that American parents are *virtually* the "standing army" of the nation. They have a controlling influence in the premises, that can give character to the nation—to the world. To them is committed, in general, by Divine appointment, the training and molding, from infancy to manhood, of those who constitute the citizens, and in whom is merged the soldiers of the whole land. They, by the Divine aid promised, can rear a nation with such clear views, deep feelings, and sound appreciation of public, national justice, as never to provoke the invasion of their own, by disturbing the rights of others; and if, without provocation, their rights are infringed from abroad, He, before whom "all the

nations of the earth are as a drop of the bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance," will direct and control the issue. They can accomplish this, by training their children for their proper place in the body-politic, with such habits of cheerful submission to just rule and government, such love of social and civil order, such enlightened zeal for the general peace and well-being of community, that every citizen will contribute his entire weight of character to the desired result, and constitute an efficient member of the nation's police. On the other hand, they can rear a generation—a race, reckless of all these interests—too ignorant to appreciate, too indolent to improve, and too impotent to preserve those gifts of Providence—the civil and religious blessings of the land. Unaccustomed, in childhood and youth, to obey and submit to proper authority, they will curse and hate the institutions that require those duties of them, in riper years. So vicious as to disregard the peace and happiness

of others, they will utterly destroy their own. Conscious of their own degradation, they will seek to level community to the same standard. The insubordination of their hearts, ripening into rebellion in action, they will become a social pestilence, "whose touch is contamination, and their embrace death!"

When these constitute the majority, and wield the power of the state, the nation's cup of crime is well-nigh filled, and soon, with a Sampson's blindness, and far more than his strength, they will bow themselves at the pillars of the temple of a nation's liberties, making its ruins alike their own sepulcher, and the monument of their diabolical madness, and writing upon it in blood the epitaph, "*Parents, American Protestant* PARENTS, have been unfaithful to themselves, their children, and their God—they have betrayed and murdered social, civil, and religious liberty, ruined the nation, and provoked the curse of Heaven upon themselves and their guilty, degenerate offspring!"

And to accomplish this work, heads of families have but little to do—little more than to remain inactive. And what little they have to do is easily done. They have only to allow their children generally to do as they please—to see that they love them so tenderly as not to correct them for any thing, and to warn the teachers that they must have the same toleration at school; then bitterly blame the faithful minister who would dare to reprove them for disorders in the house of God; explain away their minor follies, and apologize for their major faults, and defend them in all things. Let them know that all who would observe or report their delinquencies are *slanderers* of their dear children, and that in all such cases none are to be believed but themselves; flatter and encourage their pride, and call it decency; admire their imperiousness, as a sense of honor and self-respect; praise their indifference to business, as a love of study, though they never read a page but in a novel or a newspaper; and their

prodigality and excess, as high-minded liberality; applaud their contempt of all religion, as dignified abhorrence of sectarian bigotry, and the work will be done. Yes, the deluded parents will fatally succeed, not only in producing those fearful effects in social and civil society, but in the final ruin and hopeless perdition of those whom they affect to love so ardently. "But, ah! destruction stops not there;" they will succeed in their own irrevocable calamity; will inherit the disgrace of a thousand Judases, and provoke upon themselves the curse of Heaven's violated law, that must cleave to them as an eternal leprosy amidst the undying lamentations of an endless night.

But is all this only the imaginings of a superstitious mind or a disordered brain? Fortunate for the world would it be, if such were the fact. But can a fountain be pure when the sources from which alone it is supplied are loathsome from pollution? or sweet, when they are burdened with bitterness? No more can the

body-politic be sound without fidelity in the family circle, from whence all its members are supplied. Can the edifice be solid when the materials of which it is constructed are rotten and the foundation at fault? Then neither can the social and civil fabric long stand while defective family training, or, rather, no training at all, pushes its members into places for which they have no qualifications, and while its very foundation is little other than domestic misrule and household anarchy. But from the illustration of figures turn to the light of melancholy facts. Contemplate the throngs, amounting to millions, of children—boys, youth, and young men—in this nation, mostly untaught in morality and unrestrained from sin, and, from the time they could walk and talk, have been turned loose upon the tide of time and circumstances, to take lessons in folly and crime of those farther advanced in the downward road to perdition than themselves. And who has not cause to weep over their fatal

proficiency? Go to the society of the sober and industrious; they are not there. Go to the abodes of poverty, where the works of charity are to be achieved; and they are not there. Go to the habitation of the sick, where sufferings are to be relieved; but they are not there. Visit the halls of literature and science; they can not be found there. Turn to the place of moral and religious instruction—the house of God—there they can not be found. But go to the fashionable gathering, the scene of sinful amusements; go to the ball-room, the place of frolic and fun, and there many of them will be found, and among them some of the daughters. But where are the sons? Ah, where are they! Go to the bar-room, the billiard-table, the brothel; go to the horse-race, the gambling and grog-shops; to the theaters and *houses, nameless*, in consequence of their corruption, and they are there! Yes, thousands of them are in these sinks of iniquity, and not a few of them with the knowledge, consent, or advice of their

parents. Painful truth, that these thresholds of death are daily and nightly crowded with the rising generation of this land, as though zealous for, and determined on, a deeper place in hell than heathens deserve, and had thus early entered upon the desperate enterprise. But let parents remember that, as their children wear out in protracted sinning, or die suddenly by violence, in the rage and tumult of crime, God sees their blood in the parents' skirts; *they* have *virtually* procured and indorsed the damnation of their own offspring by their habitual negligence to do all in their power to train the domestic charge for a place in heaven.

Compelled to admit these appalling facts, do parents and others fancy that a remedy will be found and an increase of the evil prevented in the enactment and application of wise and wholesome laws? Vain conceit! The multitude have the power, and virtually make their own laws. We magnify and praise it as the brightest glory of the republic, "that the ma-

jority rule." And, then, let it be remembered, that when that majority is socially and politically depraved, the laws will be stamped with the same degeneracy that characterizes their source. And how many humiliating exemplifications of this are there in the history of the past and present, as fearfully admonitory and painfully ominous of what may occur in the future? Already, in some cases, is not such the prostitution of political power that the prodigal is elevated to office by the suffrages of the profligate; the vicious clothed with legislative authority by the votes of the vile? Have not the matured judgment, experience, and virtue of age been rudely thrust aside, in many instances, and superseded by the self-importance, recklessness, and inexperience of comparative youth? Hence, have not our legislative halls, looked to and venerated by the civilized world as the consecrated temples of the representative wisdom, talent, sober judgment, moral virtue, and dignified fidelity

of the nation, been, in some instances, dismantled of their glory, their honor trampled in the dust, and, for the time being, tenanted with some who were little better than renegade politicians and bankrupt demagogues; who could blaspheme the name of God in their seats, while clothed with the authority of senators? And in more than one instance, have not those sacred halls been compelled to witness the horrible crime of homicide, in the willful murder of legislators in their seats, by members of the same body? And where is the American patriot or Christian, whose cheek is not crimsoned with the blush of shame and heaven-allowed indignation at the recollection that, more than once, the hall of our national legislation has presented a scene, bearing more the aspect of the lawless mob than the collected, law-abiding wisdom, virtue, and dignity of an enlightened nation's law-makers? And what hangs this picture, already too painful to behold, in gloom almost as dark

as the pall of death is, that those deeds of moral treason against public trust and the people's honor are performed under circumstances, above all others, aside from the fear of God, most calculated to restrain. The virtuous and good of mankind, almost instinctively, turn to legislative bodies for lessons of wisdom in the laws they enact, and models of virtue and fidelity, as motives to the multitude cheerfully to obey their enactments and zealously to emulate their example. Elevated above the masses, they occupy an eminence—the honor conferred, the high trust confided, the authority with which they are invested—their whole position elicits attention, and even challenges public criticism. The public eye is upon them; with telegraphic velocity their sentiments, uttered in the legislative hall, fall on the nation's ear at home, while, by a thousand agencies, they are borne abroad to constitute a part of the daily news of other nations. The civilized world will make up the verdict, and every legislator

must, from the necessity of his position, be an object of contempt for his delinquency, or of honor for his fidelity. Hence, before men can reach such heights and depths of political depravity, they must set all restraint at defiance; must utterly disregard the opinions of the wise and virtuous abroad, and presume largely upon the degeneracy of their constituency at home. And in the latter, in too many instances, they have not "reckoned without their hosts." For have not the people, whom they represented, witnessed, with delight, their achievements for "the party," shouted over their victories, indorsed their deeds, and, at the polls, re-invested them with authority to repeat the drama of the state or nation's disgrace? And such men, generally, are not apostates from the principles of their early habits, but are only acting out, on a larger scale, and exhibiting the ripe fruits of that anarchy in which they were allowed, in childhood and youth, by miserably-delinquent parents. And if this

republic is ever clad in mourning at the sight of the blood of her profligate children; ah, if this republic ever *falls*—and fall it must, without a thorough reformation, of which the struggling heart can scarcely grasp a hope—the light of the final judgment will reveal the bitter, the withering, the ever-consuming fact, that American parents have *virtually* done the deed! To them was the first training of every citizen committed. They were looked to for lessons on the path the inexperienced feet of those who were to constitute the body-politic were first to tread. Their teachings had the pre-eminence, and first fell upon their ears. The first idea that impressed the tender intellect of the miniature citizen was the offspring of the parents' minds. They, by the special appointment of God, had the undisputed and indisputable control of the great mass of mind, in the persons of their children, that make up the citizenship of the world, and that, too, at *the time* of all others, this side eternity, most

favorable for forming characters of loyalty to sound civil government, and of obedience to God. But they have abused and virtually abandoned this Heaven-ordained trust, with which angels might deem themselves honored; and from this nursery of nations—the family circle—instead of sending out wise and virtuous citizens to honor the name they inherit, and the nation of which they constitute a part, and to be a blessing to mankind, they have sent out the lawless and depraved, and, among them, a host of boys scarcely out of their swaddling-cloths, armed with their Bowie-knives, and with their pistols in their pockets, to be a curse to community and a disgrace to the species. As God has invested the parental relation with such control, and conferred on it such signal honors—has made it the repository of that power which can mold the mind, and give character to the nation in the persons and training of their children, he holds parents responsible in the degree commensurate with the means ap-

pointed, and the authority conferred. And, unless the history of the past is a sheer slander of the race, universal observation a mere illusion, and immutable justice can change, God will visit a betrayal of this sacred trust with his consuming judgments, equal, in magnitude, to the blessing abused. Consequently, if ever this nation be laid in ruins, and inquisition shall be made for those who have moved in the premises, prepared the way, mocked the claims of God, and provoked the irrevocable doom, who will be found to be the most guilty agents?

Angels in heaven were never intrusted with such influence—devils in hell never were invested with the authority. Who, then, possessed the power? Ah, it is written before the throne, as one among the most fearful items in the reckonings of eternal retribution, parents were intrusted with the agency—parents were invested with this power for the purposes of God's glory, and to be a blessing to the race of mankind. O, what confi-

dence God has reposed in parents in confiding to them the power to wield, to an unrevealed extent, the destinies of both worlds! And eternity alone can disclose the magnitude and consequences of their crime and guilt, if they betray their trust.

2. *But the doctrine of consequences requires attention to this subject in a still more important aspect—the relation the household charge sustains to the Church of God.* He has crowned this subdivision of human society with peculiar dignity, in making it alike the illustration and auxiliary of his own house—the Church. So specific was divine Wisdom in designating the domestic circle as a miniature community, sacred to himself, that, in the organization of the militant Church, he gave her the first visible form in the household of Abraham, by constituting the father the priest of God, and the family the pastoral flock. In this arrangement God has honored the domestic charge, by making it the type of his universal and spiritual Church, ordaining

analogous points in the figure and the fact—the type and the antitype—that mutually illustrate each other. Christ is the glorious head of his universal Church, while the father—the head of the family—is his subordinate, pastoral, and ministerial head in the household Church. While Abraham, by Divine appointment, as the head of his household, typified Christ as the great head of the spiritual Church, Christ, in his character and offices, illustrates the duty of the father in the domestic charge. Christ is sublimely and divinely, in the appropriate and comprehensive use of the term, a prophet, priest, and king in his own spiritual empire—the Church—and in submission to him, as agents and ministers of his mercy, heads of families are bound to perform, morally, similar functions in their own households. Sustaining relations and trusts that would honor angels, but of which angels have been denied, they are prophets—the Lord's prophets—divinely appointed to teach, in the light of his word, their own

house—the domestic Church—the will of God and the way to heaven. And for the same reasons, and by the same authority, and for the same purposes, they are priests; not, indeed, to bring sacrifices from the fields or flocks, to witness the flowing blood of bleeding victims, or wait, with trembling, at the smoking altar, for consuming fire, but, at the domestic altar of fervent devotion, through living faith in the atoning blood and prevailing mediation of the Son of God, to offer the “sacrifice of a broken heart and a contrite spirit”—“the sacrifice of ardent prayer and thanksgiving to God” for themselves, their children, the Church, and the world. And that their teachings, as prophets, may be efficient, and, as priests, their offerings accepted, God has invested them with authority to rule, that with wisdom, meekness, tenderness, love, long-suffering, and patience, but with fidelity, firmness, and perseverance in the strength and by the authority of God, they might govern and guide their

immortal charge from sin and earth to God and heaven.

Faithfulness in those relations and duties was the ground on which Abraham was honored with the enduring designation of "the father of the faithful and the friend of God." "For I know Abraham that he will COMMAND *his children* and his *household* after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon him that which he hath spoken of him," is the divine and unerasable record of his fidelity. And the distance they are removed, in the dispensation of God, from the days of Abraham, and the different circumstances under which they are called to act, neither divest heads of families of the dignity of their relation, nor diminish their obligations to perform its duties; but, on the contrary, both are magnified in exact proportion to the increased light and multiplied means of the dispensation in which they live. From which it must be seen, with a clearness

against which men can not fully close their eyes, that God has not only, by nature, committed to parents the temporal interests of their offspring in time, but, by express revelation, constituted them, to a vastly-responsible extent, the guides and *moral guardians* of their spiritual well-being for eternity.

The Divine declaration on the subject—too plain to be misunderstood—too imperative to be questioned or contemned with impunity; of universal application and perpetual obligation—is, “Parents, bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” Tremendous trust! Fearfully-sublime investment of power in the hands of parents—power, not only to sow the seed of principles in the domestic circle that will ripen into peace, prosperity, and piety, or discord and degradation at home, and to mold the minds of, and give character to, countries and kingdoms in time, but, also, to fix their impress upon the doom and destinies of man in eternity, in augmenting

the anguish of the bottomless pit, or hightening the songs and joys of heaven. That there is no exaggeration in this, and that there is just reason to apprehend that this trust is fearfully abused, take a survey of this so reputed Christian land, and number the altars erected and sacred to the service of God in the families of which the nation is composed, and they are but as a drop to the ocean—a fragment to the whole. And among those that have been reared to the honor of the Divine name, mark the moral desolation. Many of them are forsaken, while others, dilapidated and well-nigh fallen into ruin, and no longer the center of deep spiritual domestic devotion, remain only as monuments of past piety and witnesses of present apostasy, where but little of the “form of godliness” is observed, and still less of its “power” felt. These aside, look at the mass of families that make up community, and what are they doing for, or, rather, what are they not doing against the interests of the Church of Christ and

their own souls? They have *practically* avowed their opposition, alike to the wishes of the Church, and the will of God.

He has, by his providence, organized their household, ordained their relations, appointed them their duties, thrown round them, "as a wall of fire," the protections of his care. He has redeemed them from death by the blood of his own Son, and visited their hearts with the light of heaven, by the influence of the Holy Spirit. He has invested parents with peculiar authority and dignity, and has rendered their offspring their unquestionable subordinates, and constituted the household their indisputable empire. He has provided for, and proffers to them Divine assistance to sustain, at every step in the path of domestic duty, and an "eternal weight of glory" as the reward of boundless grace. But "they have rebelled against him," and say, *practically*, to their families, "God is not worthy of our worship; we repudiate his claims, and

disregard his authority." By refusing obedience to the will of God themselves, they are daily giving *practical* lessons of rebellion against his law to their children. In refusing to go to Christ for their own salvation, they are practically teaching their household to hate the crown of glory purchased by the blood of the cross. In a word, in neglecting to walk by faith in the path of life, the way to heaven themselves, they are *practically* encouraging their household charge to pursue the broad way of sin and death. From the authority committed to parents, the appointed subordination of children, the promises of divine grace, and the assurances of the rewards of heaven, God has a right to expect, when he calls, to find the family prepared for their place in his Church—the auxiliary of heaven, for the conversion of the inhabitants of earth. But instead of obeying the heavenly call, and crowding, with their families, into the fold of Christ, they are training them, morally, as wolves, that may help to divide

and to devour the flock. While the warnings of the word of God, the invitations of the messengers of his mercy—his ministers—the extended arms, the tears and supplications of his Church, are all calculated and designed to affect their consciences, move their hearts, and win them to the cross of Christ, they are not only unmoved, but, with an ardor that would even honor the cause of heaven, rushing, with every step, with every breath, with every pulse, down to hell; fearfully hurrying themselves and families upon the retributions of eternity.

Should the inspecting angel, from the throne of heaven, visit this guilty globe, to make observations upon the interests of man and the operations of earth, and behold domestic irreligion swaying an almost undisputed scepter in multiplied thousands of families; the millions of American children and youth, many of them untaught in the word of God, and untrained in the ways of religion, moving *en masse*; and bending their steps with

alarming velocity in the broad way of sin and death; already having approached the trembling margin of the lake of unquenchable fire, and soon, without reformation prevents, to take the overwhelming plunge, and inquire, with angelic earnestness, "Who have wrought this moral domestic desolation?—who have been foremost in the calamities of these juvenile millions of this generation, that soon may terminate in death—spiritual death—the fearful second death—the hopeless horrors of an endless hell?" facts must answer—the Holy Spirit, who has been insulted by them a thousand times, in his visits to their stubborn hearts, will answer—Christ, who has redeemed them by his dying agonies upon the cross can but answer—God, who made them, and has preserved them alive, in the midst of the desolations of death, will answer: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me."

But especially does this charge lie against delinquent parents, with all its force; for on them God has conferred honors that he has withheld from angels, in confiding to them the interests of earth and heaven, in the persons of their immortal offspring. But they have enthroned moral rebellion at the altar where heaven ordained peace, and has an unquestionable right to require obedience. But God will hold them to a reckoning, as fearful as their revolt is aggravated; as impartial and certain as He is just and immutable; for whatever mysteries may mark the Divine administrations in the scheme of redemption, or the operations of providence and grace, they will all be removed from the decisions of the final judgment; and the reasons for the perdition of the lost will be written in letters of light, as unmistakable as the majesty of God, and as unerasable as the immortality of man. And when all are called to "give account of themselves to God," who will dare to say that the account parents must render

will not be fraught with consequences of the greatest magnitude? There it will be seen that other relations were human, prudential, and temporary, and that their duties and responsibilities were of a similar character; those of parents permanent, perpetual, and divine. Civil rulers followed those who had administered the affairs of state before them; pastors succeeded those who had previously fed their flocks; but God has ordained that parents shall have no predecessors in their immortal charge. Before civil institutions can exert an influence upon their children, or even know that they have a being, parents are molding their minds for the future world. Before the minister of the Gospel gets there, parents are drawing moral lines upon their undying intellect, that tell on their doom in eternity. Before the Sabbath school teacher reaches their fireside, the parents have made impressions, as lasting as the being of their children. Before Christ is there, in his word, or their offspring can comprehend his lan-

guage, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not," the parents have sown in the heart, seed, the fruits of which will be harvested in the endless future. And even before the Holy Spirit can impress their minds, as morally-accountable beings, parents are imbuing them with their own spirit, and they are daily taking lessons in the school of infantile observation, that may turn the scale of character for the untold realities of eternity. And for all this pre-eminence in their household, God holds them responsible to the bar of judgment in the great day. Parents and children must then meet, and in the light of that day will be seen the fatal agency they have exerted in each other's endless perdition.

Children may designate the parents, and exclaim, "There are my parents—the instruments of my existence. They gave me birth, but never taught me the deep depravity of my heart; but frequently flattered my pride. They never restrained my wicked passions; but fed

the fire in my bosom, by the power of their own example. They never urged me to the duty of prayer; but their own practice was a standing lesson of irreligion. They rarely ever led me to the house of God; but their own footsteps conducted me to the theater, the ball-room, and in the broad way to hell. They made the first impressions on my tender mind; and in minority I followed their example, by the force of the subordination of childhood, till rebellion against God had usurped my whole heart; and in riper years, encouraged by the same example, I chose not to change my course, till suddenly arrested by death, and hurried, in the horror of despair, from abused mercies and neglected means, to the terrors of hell; and now, at the flaming bar of eternal judgment, covered with infamy as a thick cloud, and every power of my immortal nature filled with the unutterable and inextinguishable anguish, of conscious guilt and merited perdition, I point to the parents that gave me being

as the principal agents of my endless woe, and await the doom of, 'Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire,' where eternity, only, can make up the record of the power of parental example and influence in turning the scale of their household, for the degradation and miseries of hell, or the honors and glories of heaven!" Parents, "prepare to meet your God" and your immortal offspring at the bar of final judgment, and remember, with trembling, that "*THE CURSE of the Lord is in the house of the wicked!*"

3. But we turn now from the awful consequences of delinquencies, to contemplate this subject, for a few minutes, in another aspect—*the glorious effects on the parents, the children, the Church, and the world, of faithfulness in domestic duties.* This work demands consistency. It can never be accomplished by that sickly sanctity of those that can weep over the woes and wickedness of men abroad, but are blind to the depravity, pride, and neglect of God at home; that are ardent in

professions of zeal for the conversion of the heathen, but feel little or no concern that their own household are going down to perdition unconverted; that rejoice in accessions to the Church, and profess great concern for her prosperity, but have few or no tears to shed that their own families are growing up in habitual hostility to the Church and to God. If such would promote the real interest of the Church, they must begin the work at home; if they would see the disorders and wickedness of men diminished, they must, in the strength of sovereign grace, seek their destruction in their own house; if they would see the heathen, the world, converted to God, they must, with all the ardor that the love of bone of their bone, flesh of their flesh, and soul of their soul can inspire—all the earnestness that the fear of their families going down to hell, and the desire that they may at last sing in heaven can awaken—with all the fervor that the love of God, and an invincible faith in the atonement and mediation of

Jesus Christ can prompt, seek that their own undying household may be the first trophies of that boundless, blood-bought, world-converting grace. These godly purposes, firmly fixed in the heart, and reduced to daily practice in life, will organize each household, as the divinely-appointed and heaven-approved auxiliary of the Church of God, for the moral conquest of the world. It will withdraw the millions of the rising generation from the ranks of the enemies of the cross of Christ in a day, and hurl confusion into the center of all the dark, diabolical designs, and spread terror and dismay throughout the entire, usurped territories of the foe. It will procure from the heavenly throne, in the richest effusions, the blessings and grace promised: "They that seek me early shall find me," and, "I will honor them that honor me." God, the boundless source of all human blessedness, will behold in every house an altar raised to his honor, and will hear the lisping, but earnest voice of childhood and youth, min-

gling with that of hoary age, in the celebration of his own praise; well pleased with the offering, will pour the benedictions of heaven upon the household; and the Son, the Prince of peace, will dwell there, by the works and witness of the Holy Spirit in their humble and obedient hearts. Parents will then rear their children for, and give them with delight to, the Church; the Church, walking in "the comfort," and working by the strength "of the Holy Spirit," will become, indeed, the city upon an eminence, as God's agent—the light of the world.

The Church of Christ, in all her officers, and in every department, reanointed, rebaptized with the unction from heaven, will clearly see, and fully appreciate, her appropriate work upon earth—the glory of God in the salvation of man. All her means will be consecrated to God, and the footsteps of her missionaries will be seen in speedy pursuit of the most hopeless wanderers of our race, and their voices heard, in proffering the salvation

of the cross in every country, clime, and kingdom where men have revolted from God. Her mandate will send the light of revelation—the Bible—to the darkest abodes of human wretchedness this side the tomb, to illumine the pathway from the prison of sin and gloom of earth, to the liberty of God's children and the glories of heaven. Godly men will constitute the body-politic; and men of God will guide the affairs of state. The spirit of Christ in his Church, will render a verdict of eternal infamy against the demon of war, and despots, humbled by divine grace, will bow, as beggars, at the cross of Jesus Christ for salvation, or by divine justice be consumed from the earth they pollute. The bonds of oppression will be broken, by the true spirit of the King of kings reigning in his Church, from the emaciated limbs of every member of the family of man, without respect to color or to caste; and the angels from heaven will resume the song and shouts of Bethlehem, "Glory to God in the high-

est, and on earth peace, good-will to men;" while the inhabitants of earth, brought back to their allegiance to God, will respond, from the equator to the poles, and the hemispheres, blending in one unbroken brotherhood, will re-echo the shout, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will to men;" "for the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ." Amen.

Then may men and angels exclaim, "O, what hath God wrought for the fallen race of man!" Then may be seen in all its clearness the honor he has conferred on the domestic relations, and the powerful agency of parents, under God, in the salvation of their children, and the conversion of the nations of the earth; an honor and an agency producing and accompanied by such refined enjoyments as, in no ordinary sense, to compensate, even in this world, for the vast cares, toils, and responsibilities involved in this holy relation. Happy families of earth, when thus

solemnly consecrated to God; and peaceful and happy earth, when all its families are employed in serving him! And that our faith may be perfected in regard to these glorious results, look at this subject again. Contemplate the character and spirit of the families that compose the Church, and meditate the moral conquest of the world. Parents and children—the whole family, deeply conscious that “they are not their own, but that they are bought by the blood of Jesus Christ,” become, of choice, by entire self-devotion, “living sacrifices to God” and his holy cause. He, by the witness and influence of the Holy Spirit, dwells in their hearts, and “the life they live in the flesh, is by the faith of the Son of God.” Perfect resignation to the Divine will in all things is an element of their Christian being; and they recognize a Father’s hand from heaven, in all the operations of grace, and administrations of Providence on earth. They are prepared, by heavenly grace, for every thing which God allots to them

in their earthly pilgrimage. They rejoice in patiently suffering, as well as diligently performing the whole will of their Father in heaven. They rejoice in what he withholds, as well as what he gives; in what he withdraws, as well as that which he leaves. Their joy is full in knowing that they are glorifying God, in all the ways which he may appoint. They are prepared, through the riches of boundless grace in Jesus Christ, to do or suffer—to live or die; conscious, through the power of living faith, that the bliss enjoyed by the household on earth, is but a foretaste of the glory that awaits the family in heaven. The vicissitudes of time may shake all things that are earthly; but the light of faith points them to their abiding home on high, and holy hope binds them to the throne. Falling friends and fellow-beings, on the right hand and on the left, may admonish them of their own mortality; but they remember the victories of the cross. Death may enter their habitation—a beloved member may fall under

his stroke here, another may fall yonder, till the children are orphans, the parents childless, the mother a widow, the father companionless; or the household broken up, and the dust of its members laid low in the tomb; but at each onset of the foe, and as his victim falls, Christ, the conqueror of death, proclaims, "I am the resurrection and the life; and he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live again."

The survivors hearken, and with uncomplaining submission, and all the confidence of triumphant faith, till the last one is gathered home to God, respond, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; and blessed be the name of the Lord!" "All things shall work together for good, to them that love God." To them, Death has lost his sting, and the tomb its terrors. They look upon the one as a conquered foe, and into the other as the end of tears and toil, hallowed by the Son of God, and sacred to the repose of the mortal remains of his saints, till raised and renewed in

his own image, and clothed with his own immortality and eternal glory. They contemplate the extinction of mortal life, as but a release from the perils of probation, a transmission to the paradise of God, and the renewal of their hope in the triumphs of the cross, and the final glories of the resurrection. And when called to their home in the skies, and filled with ecstasies divine, and abounding in heavenly bliss, to which earth is an utter stranger, if not themselves ministering spirits, and active agents in the grand achievements, they may behold the Church, baptized from the throne of heaven, with an enlightened, living zeal, and filled with an unconquerable energy of character, and the power of perfect faith, that would deem themselves dishonored in the pursuit of an object less than the universal promulgation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, fully accomplishing the purposes of her divine organization, and speedily redeeming the sublime pledge implied in her very existence on earth—the conver-

sion of the fallen and ruined world to God.

The Church, made up of such godly households, by the divinity of her teachings and majesty of her example, rolls back the dark clouds of ignorance and sin, which, for ages, hung around the nations of the earth as the habiliments of moral death, and pours her light upon the world, and points every wanderer to the cross and to the crown. Her fervent prayers and invincible faith “move the arm that moves the world;” and her last conquest, for the subjugation of the world to God, is achieved in the tender of the salvation of the Gospel—the purchase of the blood of the Son of God—to every member of our apostate and ruined race. “For this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached to all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come.” Then, the sublime purposes of an infinitely wise and perfect Providence accomplished, the Church, bright in the moral image of the infinite Savior, her

agency on earth consummated, waits, in hope, with reverence and with raptures, for the glorious rewards of grace in heaven. The world, ripe for judgment, and time, trembling as a drop ready to be absorbed in the boundless ocean of unending duration, all, all pause, penetrated with the grandeur of the changes wrought in the past, as sublimely ominous of the revolutions soon to be revealed in the future, and wait the mandate of the throne in heaven to terminate the probation of man upon earth—close forever the scenes of time, and transmit the race to all the realities of eternity. It is done! The seat of saving mercy and availing mediation is succeeded by the throne of universal judgment and eternal retribution. The once slaughtered but risen, and, for ages, the interceding Savior now, in risen, glorified human nature, assumes his regal character and office of infinite judge, issues that mandate, and the archangel, honored with the trust, pours the thunders of the world-awaking trump of

final judgment upon all the intelligences of God's universe. Its resistless tones, by the authority of Omnipotence, from the highest heavens, fill all the sepulchral regions of the lowest earth, where, for protracted ages, have been scattered the dust of the dead, penetrates the dull ear of death, and bids universal humanity into active being—into undying life. There the untold millions of antiquity—of all time—of the entire race—divested of all assumed, acquired, artificial, or unreal distinctions, must appear in their own intrinsic character at the inflexible bar of impartial and irrevocable retribution. Instant with the deathless consciousness of their real character, as by the immutable laws of moral gravitation, peculiar to eternity, all tend to their appropriate place on the right hand or the left of their almighty Judge.

The last judgment is set. Families are there; the assembled universe of mankind are there; and the very being of every member is traced to the domestic

relations. The books are opened, and the undying vigor of every man's conscience is, in reference to his own case, a perfect duplicate of the record. Whole families, and parts of families, covered with confusion, and self-condemned, stand on the left hand, and behold, with a clearness as awful as the throne before which they are judged is inflexible, the record of their rebellion on earth, and the reasons founded in eternal justice of their hopeless perdition in hell. But on the right hand stand the unnumbered hosts of the saints of God, including whole families, and the pious members of all others, who recognize and hail each other as belonging to and constituting the brotherhood of heaven. They, too, see, with the same clearness and light, their own character and destiny, and the demonstrations of God's wonderful grace. All behold, with unobscured perspicuity, that God, in infinite love, provided salvation for every member of the fallen family, and that the rejection of that salvation, by the

wicked, is the *meritorious cause* of their endless perdition; and that its acceptance, by the pious, is the *gracious condition* of their final glory. Darkness no longer hangs around the dispensations of God, or his dealings with men. The clouds of mist or mystery that shrouded the actions of mankind on earth, are consumed by the light of heaven. The speculations and errors, in reference to character, cherished in time, are swept from the universe by the blaze of eternity. The guilty lips of skepticism and caviling are eternally sealed by an indelible consciousness of self-condemnation. The destinies of the changeless future hang upon the lips of the infinite Judge. One word—*holy* or *unholy*—will inscribe the true character of all on the records of the throne, and one brief sentence—“*Come, ye blessed,*” or, “*Depart, ye cursed*”—will fix their doom for eternity.

A moment will seal the condition of the race of man. Awful moment! The decision of the judgment-throne falls upon

the ears and hearts of the *unholy* with a terror deep as the agonies of "the second death:" "Depart, ye cursed," and "these shall go away into everlasting punishment;" but to the *holy*, "Come, ye blessed," and "the righteous shall rise into life eternal," and realize their utmost hopes in "an eternal weight of glory" and all the raptures of heaven. And so refulgent, resistless, awfully sublime, and overwhelming will be the evidences of real character, that the intelligent universe will see, feel, and be compelled to admit, that in the irrevocable sentence that consigns sinners to hell and exalts saints to heaven, every perfection of the infinite Godhead is vindicated, justified, and eternally honored and glorified.

Stupendous scene, and transcendent thought! The perfection of terror and glory—the result of "eternal judgment;" heaven filled with raptures, and hell with horrors; families crowned with glory, and families doomed to perdition; parts of families in the fellowship of heaven,

and others in the companionship of hell! To the one, the cross, the cares, the conflicts, the toils, tears, and duties of earth are exchanged for the crown, the kingdom, and undying honors of the Church on high. To the other, the gayety, the ungodliness, pleasures, and disobedience of time are succeeded by the tears, the anguish, and wailings of the guilty lost in eternity. But we forbear to pursue the dreadful thought, and turn from the dead, the risen, the judged, condemned, and lost, and appeal again to the living.

The living—the parents, whose relations and duties lie at the foundations of society, and are the hope of earth and heaven! Through the astonishing forbearance and mercy of God you still live. You are not yet numbered with the dead, nor consigned to perdition. You are not yet before the bar of judgment, to read and meet the result of your delinquencies without the benefit of a mediator. Heaven is yet propitious; God still waits to be gracious; Christ is still your advo-

cate before the throne; the Holy Spirit yet visits your heart; conscience urges you to duty, and you may yet be saved in heaven, with all your household. Children, dear children, none have a deeper interest in this subject than you have. Your obligations to obey your parents, "in the Lord," are as imperative as their duty to instruct and restrain you is unquestionable and plain. Consider the responsibilities God has laid upon your parents, and the Church, in your behalf, and the inexpressible interest that Heaven takes for your well-being in this and the future world. O, think of the solemn fact, that every act of unkindness to them, or disobedience to their proper instructions, will be marked with the double guilt of sinning against your parents and against God; and, unless repented of and forsaken, will ruin your immortal souls forever.

But if you are bent on being wicked, you can resist all these influences—the mercies of God, the mediation of Christ, the strivings of the Spirit; you may throw

off the restraints and disregard the instructions and example of pious parents; you may wade through their tears, entreaties, and prayers, and bring their "gray hairs in sorrow to the grave;" you may condemn the teachings of the ministers of Christ, and despise the prayers of his Church; but know, for all this, "God will bring you into judgment." And when you are separated from the honorable, the virtuous, and the pious; when separated from kind and godly parents forever; and when driven from the presence of Jesus Christ, your final judge, whom you would not own and serve as a Savior, you may see, from the prison of endless sorrow, that the first step you took in the way to hell, was that of ingratitude and disobedience to kind and pious parents. O, children, stop and think! Hasten to Christ and confess all your sins, and resolve, in his name and strength, that, from this time hence, you will humbly and faithfully serve God with your parents.

O, parents and children—the whole family—though we may never have an acquaintance on earth, other than is formed through the medium of this unpretending and plain discourse, suffer one who feels a deep and insuppressible interest for your salvation, to plead with you in the name of the crucified Savior, to consecrate yourselves to his service without a moment's delay. Death holds his dark scepter over your defenseless heads, and the grave extends its arms to gather you quickly among the dead. Eternity is just before you, and “hell moves from beneath to meet you at your coming.”

As you deprecate the horrors of a death-bed in despair; as you tremble at the thought of entering the dark “valley of the shadow of death” without a friend; as the apprehensions of a guilty family meeting at the bar of God are overwhelming; as you would shrink from the lamentations of the lost, the degradations of the damned, the undying worm of conscious guilt, and the quenchless fires of

the "second death," fly, O, fly for your lives to the cross, the blood of atonement, and mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

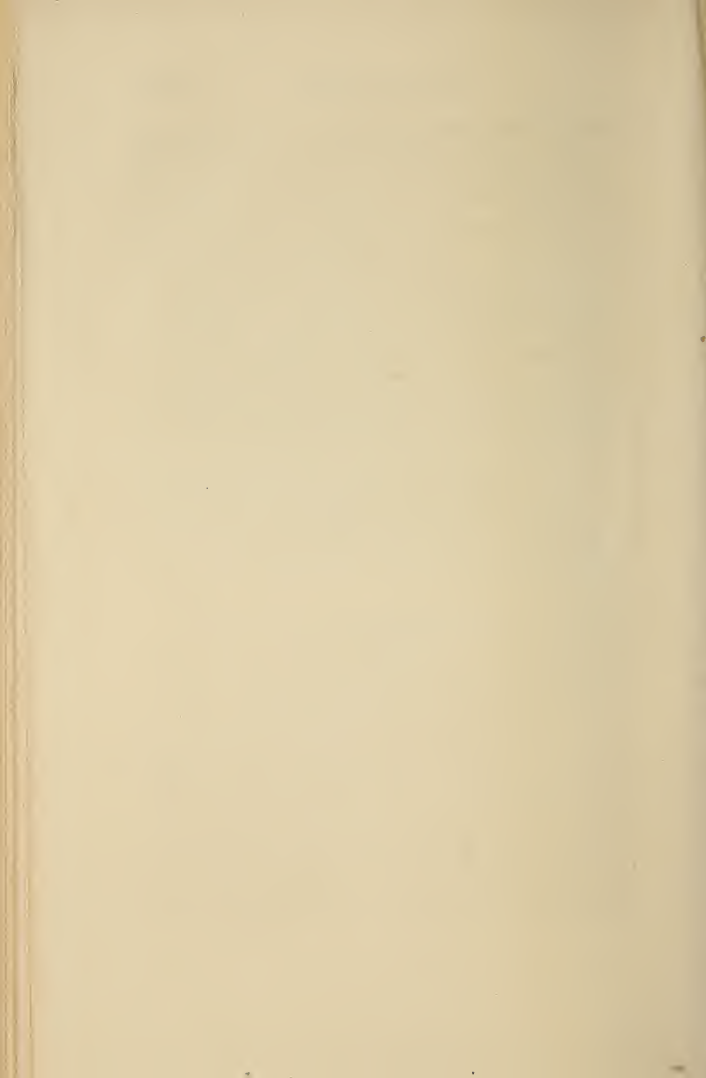
We plead with you, by the consolations of religion; its hallowed influences in the domestic circle; the power of God and the comforts of his love in your hearts in a dying hour; the glories of the resurrection morn; the approbation of the infinite Judge; the honors of the fadeless crown, and the endless glories of heaven—we urge you, by all your desires for happiness in this and the future world; by all your desires to meet in heaven, and enjoy the fellowship of angels, and the smiles of God forever—by all these motives we implore you, as a family, to consecrate yourselves wholly to the service of God. We plead with you, by all that God has done for you, in giving you being and preserving you alive in the midst of the desolations of death; by his infinite love in the gift of his own Son for your redemption; by the infinite condescension of Jesus Christ, in "bearing your sins in his own

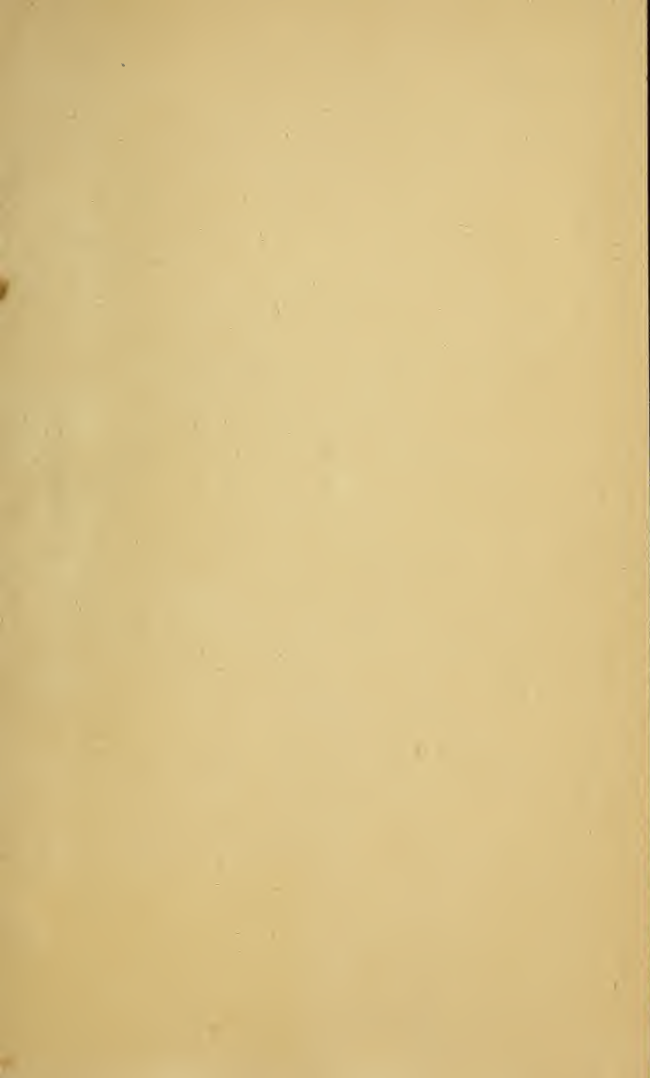
body on the bloody cross; by the infinite compassion and patience of the Holy Spirit in moving your consciences and melting your hearts; by all that is of real interest on earth, in time, and all the honors and glories of heaven, through eternity; by all the danger you are in of at last losing your immortal souls, and going down to enhance the horrors of an endless hell; by all these perils, promises, and prospects, we earnestly beseech you now, in the strength of almighty grace, to settle the purpose in your hearts to serve the Lord as an entirely consecrated house.

God's eyes are upon you; the Holy Spirit is ready to help your infirmities; divine grace is proffered for your aid; and before you finish this page, if you have never done it before, decide the principle; let it be the invincible decision of your will; let it be inscribed indelibly upon your heart; let it be attested by an honest conscience; let it be understood in the family; let it become the sovereign

rule of the household, that the registering angel may bear the intelligence above, and make the record before the throne, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." And may God strengthen your purpose; renew you in the glorious image of Christ; sustain you in all the duties of life; comfort you in the hour of death, and conduct you in triumph, through faith in Jesus Christ, to heaven!

THE END.





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